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CRITICAL ESSAYS ON THE PERFORMERS OF THE LONDON THEATRES; INCLUDING GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRACTICE AND GENIUS OF THE STAGE. BY THE AUTHOR OF THE THEATRICAL CRITICISMS IN THE WEEKLY PAPER CALLED *THE NEWS*. *London: printed by and for John Hunt, at the Office of The News, 28, Brydges Street, Strand.*

THESE Essays abound in a variety of judicious observations and remarks, which, though addressed to readers of a particular description, will afford general entertainment and delight, were it only for the pleasantry of the style, enlivened as it is by such a flow of fancy, such display of humour, so many apt allusions and so much originality of thought, which, whilst they manifest the genius, mark the juvenility of the writer. They are however more particularly to be valued for the evidence they bear of the sincere and manly character of their author, who with an honest contempt for the popular farce-writers of the time, observes—*that every actor, who repeats the nonsense of these scribblers with all its effect, hurts his*

own reputation in proportion as he would extend theirs; for when the owl screeches, the echo must screech also.

It is not my design, and I do not consider it as my duty, to attend upon this critic through his whole list of performers, amounting to not less than thirty. I will say something of those, who have ceased to live, but I will treat sparingly and tenderly of those, who are to earn their living by their labours on the stage. I approve of their being told of faults, which it would be for their interest to correct; but as I will not arraign them for defects, with which nature has unalterably endowed them, I must be perfectly satisfied that correction is in their power before I move them to attempt it: As objects of our general censure they have no defence; as servants of the theatre, exhibiting themselves on a stage for our amusement, they have no fastnesses to retreat to from our attack; they are at our mercy, and discouragement partakes of persecution; until a performer shall offend against the respect due to his audience, great respect and lenity are justly due to his feelings.

I have something, but not much, wherewith to reproach my author upon this account; and as it chiefly, if not exclusively, applies to Mr. Pope, I shall reverse the order of his list, and say in few words what I can say with truth of that intelligent and meritorious actor. In all my dramatic concerns with Mr. Pope, which have not been few, I have ever found him strictly punctual in his rehearsals, studiously correct and faithful to his author in representation, and devoting himself to the general interests of the piece as well as to the particular duties of his part with zeal so ardent and so cordial, that if this testimony, which I now oppose to a criticism, that condemns him in the gross, may in any degree compensate for the asperity of it, it is a defence that I should have entered upon from conviction of his merits, had I not been also moved to it from a grateful sense of his good services.

It is happy for an actor when nature has bestowed upon him

an expressive countenance; but if he has it not by nature, he cannot make it such by art. Let him not hear of privations, which he cannot supply; tell him only of such errors as he is able to correct. Of all the variety of human countenances, that which is characterised by no prevailing passion is perhaps the most unlucky one an actor can be born with, as being least convertible to stage-effect; still if nature be in the heart, and inspire it with its proper feelings, the features will, in some degree at least, obey its movements. This was the case with Henderson: in his hours of perfect quietude and relaxation his eye slept, and his countenance displayed no promise; but when the spirit within him, though naturally indolent, was awakened by the genius of his poet, he rushed at once into the character he was destined to assume, and the whole man harmonized with the passion, that he really felt. But that latent energy, which was in him, whom all the Drama's friends have reason to lament, is not the property of every man, and there will be rarely found another actor, with a countenance, that augured so little, endued with talents to effect so much.

It is true that every performer, who is possessed of a powerful and well-toned voice, is responsible for the management of it, and should not upon all occasions send it round the theatre in compliment to those, who are only in the lobbies. There are not many occasions, that demand of the performer to draw out all the stops of his organ: the proper government and adaptation of its tones is a secret, which but few possess, and yet it is the grand desideratum of all public speaking. The ear, the judgement and the feelings of the declaimer must unite their influence and conspire to aid him in the attainment of that nice discrimination, in which consists the very excellence of his art, and which alone can crown his efforts with success; for should he strive to elevate what in itself is low, and to depress what should be lofty, does that actor understand his author, or consult his reason? Though his entrance on the stage as a hero or a king may be announced with a flourish, he

is not obliged to out-talk his own trumpets, neither is it always necessary for him to make his exit in a passion.

I confess that whilst our two overgrown theatres were standing, this art, of which I have been speaking, was no easy attainment; yet I think our chief Tragedian Mr. Kemble fully understood the importance of it, and practised it successfully; though vehement exertion of the lungs, unhappily for him, was what his frame could ill endure, yet by distinct articulation, and a certain high-pitched modulation, approaching in acuteness to what is called a falsetta, he was perfectly well heard in all parts of the theatre, and by never suffering his voice to sink from the sharpness of its key into those guttural and growling flats, in which his sister has accustomed herself to pitch her inaudible pathetic, he affords a striking proof to what great and judicious account even the sparing gifts of nature may be turned by the economy of art.

How very few possess that delicacy of ear, which should regulate the voice in reading or reciting to few or many, in a large space or a small! Neither Henderson, nor even Garrick, understood this secret, of distinguishing rightly between a play-house and a private room. Of the two, Henderson was the more ungovernably above pitch; yet Garrick had indulged himself in the habit of bawling out to servants and stage-retainers, till he broke the finer notes of his natural organ, and only spared the clapper of his bell. Let Mr. Pope be never strenuous but when he has something sturdy to contend with, and be in every part as true to nature, as he is in Shakespear's Henry the Eighth, he may defy criticism.

Mr. Hunt has laid down many admirable rules of general utility: let me add one more, and if I particularly address it to Mr. Pope, I am persuaded his good sense will take it in good part: the advice I would offer to him is not to take Horace's word upon trust, and be so free to sob and show the signal of his sorrows to the spectators, lest they should not be in the humour to obey it, and leave him perhaps to the solitary

self-indulgence of bewailing (which some may interpret as applauding) his own exquisite emotions. I have seen Barry weep; but there were not many dry eyes in the theatre when his gave way; and Henderson I have reason to believe never shed tears, but when he could not help it. Therefore I am tempted to advise Mr. Pope and Mr. Elliston, and all those whimpering gentlemen, and whining ladies, who affect a pleonasm in the pathetic, to distrust that Horatian maxim,

—Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primùm ipsi tibi.—

Artificial stammerings, and blubberings and strugglings for breath, as if fighting against suffocation, are dangerous experiments, for they are in general merely tricks of the stage, open to discovery, and hardly to be ranked above the manual joke, of sawing a truncheon, that it may shiver with a stroke upon the shoulders of an under-actor, who manfully endures the blow because he saw the carpenter disarm the weapon.

The author of these Essays is a critic, friendly to the stage, when he points out some general errors and offences against local propriety in the mass of our performers, which he sums up under the following charges of—*Glancing at the boxes—Adjusting the dress—Telling the audience their soliloquies—Wearing their hats in rooms, and—Not wearing them in the open air.* There is no denying that these faults are glaring, and demand correction: The glances at the boxes, and adjustments of the dress, are impertinent and unpardonably out of place. The mismanagement of soliloquies leaves offenders without excuse, now that they have both the precept of Mr. Hunt, and the example of Mr. Kemble, to instruct them in a better practice: As to their intolerable misapplication of hats, it is an indecorum, that exposes them to every body's censure; when they wear them in a gentleman's chamber, his footman should be called to kick them out of it; but when in

a lady's, the hangman should be summoned to perform his office. Such violations of propriety are not to be endured: let them be corrected, and I shall be ready and content to agree with Mr. Hunt, that our Royal Stages have in no period of my remembrance been more amply furnished with performers, capable of doing justice to the best writers, and something more than justice warrants to the bad.

At the same time it is of a long succession of departed favourites, eminent in their profession, that I could speak within the period of nearly seventy years. To have seen them, and retain a lively recollection of their persons and performances, is amongst the few gratifications, which Time bestows upon old age in compensation for much better comforts, which he takes away.

I can imagine that I sit and hear the deep-toned and declamatory roll of Quin's sonorous recitation; solemn, articulate and round; dealt out with that pedantic magisterial air, as if he were a professor lecturing his pupils *ex cathedrâ*, and not an actor addressing his audience from the stage. I can fancy that I see him sawing the air with his unwieldy arm, whilst the line laboured as he mouthed it forth. A vast full-bottomed perriwig, bepowdering a velvet coat embroidered down the seams, a long cravat, square-toed high-heeled shoes, and rolled silk stockings, clothing two sturdy legs, that rivalled ballustrades, were in his day the equipments of a modern tragic hero; whilst the hoop and shape (as we see it represented by Hogarth) surmounted by a high-plumed helmet over the aforesaid full-bottom, denoted the Roman or Grecian chief in his antient and appropiate costuma.— We saw those things without amazement then.

Let me not however fail to recollect, that this Atlas of the stage could stand under the enormous globe of Falstaff's paunch, and carry himself through that eccentric character with consummate pleasantry. When I saw him once in that part I was very young, and of course very easily amused; but it was in

my much riper state of judgment, when I kept much more careful watch upon Henderson in the same part, and his performance was according to my conception of good acting one of those instances, so soon summed up, of absolute histrionic perfection; and I class it in my idea of excellence with the Lear of Garrick, the Lady Macbeth of Mrs. Pritchard, the Penruddock of Kemble, and (I must take leave to add) with the Iago of Mr. Cooke.

Quin was not a confined actor: he did not walk in a narrow path, but took a circuit in his road to fame through all the graver casts of the legitimate sententious comedy. He would not have done much for the merry dramatists of the present day, but to the writers of the middle age, Vanbrugh and Farquhar and Congreve, he was a tower of strength. I believe he was oratorical preceptor to His present Majesty; I know he taught Lord Halifax and some other persons of distinction; and till the pointed penetrating style of Garrick gave a less laborious and a quicker current to poetic measure, Quin's Atlantic swell kept its majestic roll unrivalled.

It is no new thing to tell the world that Quin was a mannerist: every tragic performer, male or female, has been, is and will be a mannerist, as long as the stage endures. Mrs. Cibber was decidedly such. I have her now in my mind's eye. I behold a slender graceful form from between the wings of a wide expanded hoop-petticoat (pushed sideways on the stage) *rise like an exhalation.* As she advanced in the character of Calista, Belvidera, or Monimia, she pitched her recitation in that plaintive key, from which she hardly ever varied, and you felt yourself professedly at a tragedy in the first sentence that she uttered. It was sweet, but it was sweetness that sickened you; a song that wearied you; a charm that unnerved, a perfume that stifled you... You would have thanked Mr. Fawcet, or any other saw-grinder, to have broken the spell. There was no bearing the pathetic prolongation of one silver tone although melodious as Apollo's harp. Neither is there any

reason why metrical recitation should copy the mechanical correctness of a steam-engine: because heroic lines are all of the same length, it does not imply that they must all be set to the same tune, and sung in the same time. Let the heroine, who wishes to have mourners at her death, recollect that the swan only sings when she is dying. Whilst I am writing this, I have Mrs. Henry Siddons in my thoughts; and as this is the one only instance in which she shares the failings of her prototype, I sincerely wish her to dismiss it. Every picture must have light and shade: the eye enjoys the change of seasons; so does the ear of sounds. The tragic performer should be aware, that the passions must not be wearied by continual solicitation; the strong appeal must be reserved for great occasion. No hearer can sit through five long acts of continual lamentation: the finest feelings are the most fugacious; they can only be arrested by a master hand, and then they can be held but for a certain time; a tedious petition destroys its own purpose, and a loquacious pleader is not calculated to excite compassion.

Mrs. Cibber was extremely elegant and alluring in her action: her very frame was fashioned to engage your pity, for it seemed wasted with sorrow and sensibility; the cheek was hollow, and the eye was joyless; there was neither youth, nor health, nor beauty; yet perhaps in the representation of many of her characters she became more impressive by the privation of those charms, than she would have been in the possession of them. I have heard some, who remembered her, contend, that as an actress, she has never been equalled. I am not of that opinion. Her style and manner harmonized with Barry's, as Mrs. Pritchard's did with Garrick's. Barry was the Marc Antony and Romeo of the stage; Garrick would have played Macbeth and Abel Drugger in the same night, and Mrs. Pritchard would have played with him as Lady Macbeth and Doll Common. Foote said, that Garrick would have rehearsed Richard the Third before a kitchen-fire in July to amuse the

boy that turned the spit. I do not know that Mrs. Pritchard would have done quite as much, but she was so little fastidious about her cast of parts, that she took first, second or third, as they fell to her lot; and as Nature was her guide, she always appeared to be the very character she assumed. Whilst she could display the finest powers in the loftiest parts, I have seen her play the humble confidante to Mrs. Cibber's heroine, and never give an elevation to a single line above its pitch and station in the drama. I remember her coming out in the part of Clarinda in *The Suspicious Husband*, whilst Garrick acted Ranger. The unfitness of her age and person only added to the triumph of her talents. As Garrick's genius could dilate his stature, so could her excellence give grace and juvenility to her person. In short he might have played a giant, and she a fairy, if Shakespear would have written parts for them. On the first night of *The Jealous Wife*, at which I was present, she rescued Garrick from his embarrassment, and the audience from its languor, when she broke out and feigned a fit, that electrified the theatre, and saved the play.

The part of Lady Macbeth is probably the strongest test, to which the genius and powers of an actress can be put. None can attempt it with impunity, whose abilities are not of the highest order; for the passions that it stirs, the language it employs and the energy it demands, are all of the sublimest cast. As our nation to its honour boasts the poet, who conceived it, so has it also had to boast of actresses, who in succession from the date of its production to the present day of Mrs. Siddons have figured in that luminous situation without diminishing its lustre.

As I am now speaking of Mrs. Pritchard, and not called upon, nor disposed, to make comparisons, I shall only say that I retain a strong impression of her excellence. I have distinctly in my mind her conduct and deportment in the opening scene, where meditating on the intelligence her husband's letter had imparted to her, she gives the first tremendous indication

of her character; during which she never failed to command the profoundest stillness and attention throughout all the theatre. As she proceeded to unfold her thoughts, and her mind seemed expanded to admit the visions her ambition teemed with, her air, voice, feature, form itself, and her whole nature visibly imbibed the poet's inspiration: then it was we felt that thrilling horror at our hearts, which gave us the full consciousness of her powers, and proved there was an actress, who could picture to the life a character of the most terrific sublimity, that ever man's imagination formed.

To her succeeded Mrs. Yates; to Mrs. Cibber Mrs. Barry, and the stage was still respectably supported. Mrs. Barry in her best days was a lovely and enchanting actress: she possessed in an eminent degree all the properties, that are adapted to express and to excite the tender passions. She had more variation and flexibility of tone than Mrs. Cibber, and her eyes were powerful auxiliaries to her voice and action. She was not exclusively a tragic actress, but filled the characters of upper comedy with great success. I do not recollect to have seen Garrick play with more animation on any occasion, than when upon the stage with her, as for instance in the part of Don Felix and others of that amatory cast. In those days, before theatres were of the size, to which they since have grown, the countenances of performers could be distinctly seen, and the language of the eyes could be understood by the spectators; and not to have discovered how their lively comment animated and improved the text would have been a loss indeed.

Of Garrick it was not originally my purpose to have spoken in this place; but the recollection of his various and enchanting talents presses on my mind, and not to speak of him, when speaking of his colleagues and contemporaries, is a self-denial that I cannot practise. He was the great promoter (I had almost said the founder) of that legitimate taste for the early dramatists, particularly Shakespear, which Mr. Kemble, to his

honour be it spoken, struggles to uphold, but struggles against a torrent of mummery and machinery and song and spectacle, which the circumstances of the time he lives in, and of the stage he treads, render it impossible for him to do more than struggle with; it is a turbid torrent which he cannot stem. If he cannot trust himself to the character even of Macbeth on the little stage in the Haymarket without Mother Goose to cackle in his after-piece, neither could Garrick have filled that *Colliseum*, which is now a ruin, unless Johnson had drawn out his elephants to allure the gapers in the galleries: All the intelligence of his eye, the archness of his smile, the movement of his brow, the touching pathos of his under-tones, spent in their passage through the misty void, would have failed to reach the outskirts of that greedy theatre; and he would have found himself only understood in the neighbourhood of the orchestra, whilst the rest of the spectators would have discovered little else in the finest actor, that ever lived, but the diminutiveness of his figure.

If the dreadful spectacle, which those blazing theatres have alternately displayed to the astonished capital, cannot burn them into smaller and more modest compass, but that they will rise more splendid from the downfall, and defy their fortune, the same resources must supply the same demands, the Muse of Comedy must resume her cap and bells, and the proprietors must again call forth *aut ursum*, *aut pugiles*, to amuse the people's eyes, when they no longer can regale their ears.

Mrs. Yates was an actress of a loftier cast and higher tone than either Mrs. Cibber or Mrs. Barry—

For dignity compos'd, and high exploit,

her natural powers were great, her genius bold, her person, voice and action so commanding, that sometimes in the domineering torrent of her passion, she would so overbear her interlocutors, as almost to outstep decorum and monopolize the stage. Still where any great and striking effect was to be produced, I have never seen the performer, who in my opinion

surpassed Mrs. Yates. In short, she was as decidedly formed and fashioned by the hand of Nature to be an actress, as Mr. Kemble is to be an actor. She had an independent style unmethodized by art; a spirit that disdained prescription, and a towering genius, that dreaded nothing but mediocrity.

This great heroine is now no more; but the stage has still possession of an actress, whom all have admired, and many idolized. Were I only called upon to speak of Mrs. Siddons as she has been, I should say that in her first display of character she was as pure, as perfect and as near to Nature as Nature's fairest representative could be. I apprehend she has too cautiously restrained and circumscribed her powers, and being sensible that repetition needs relief, has not sufficiently considered that absolute perfection does not admit of variation; why else she should resort so often to her under-tones I cannot tell, for they are positively inaudible, and the people, who call upon her to speak louder, should convince her that she is still too fine a speaker to be allowed to deprive them of their right without a remonstrance.

As an actor, who in the decline of our national taste stands firm in the support of the legitimate drama, and may be truly styled the *gravis Æsopus* of his time, Mr. Kemble has my most sincere respect, and when I bear this unprejudiced testimony to his merit, I am moved to it by no other consideration, but as I think it due from me, being the conductor of a work, devoted to the interests of fair criticism and contemporary genius. If he is evidently cautious how he lends himself to great variety of character, he very probably acts wisely for his fame, and prudently for his health; but I am far from sure, that we have seen him in the whole capacity of his powers, nor does it follow, because he has never stepped beyond the boundaries of his genius, that he has absolutely stepped up to them. I rather think, that if he chose to sally from his entrenchments, he might take new ground, and post himself very strongly on it. I have watched him in his *Leon*, and will venture to say

that his fatuity in that character is more highly coloured than that of Garrick's was. I dare say my readers can recollect certain parts, in which his unimpassioned recitation, that would hang so heavy in the hands of others, has a charm that never wearies us in his. I am satisfied he might considerably enlarge his compass, if he would. Nevertheless we must confess the stamp of Nature is upon him as the tragic hero; and when we add to that the habits he has acquired by the study of his art, and probably by the disposition also of his mind, he has a right, if he sees fit, to be seen in none but the gravest and most dignified situations. Nay although it were allowed on all hands, and he himself were conscious, that such were the true compass and determined limitation of his histrionic powers, yet Mr. Kemble would have no right to arraign the liberality of Nature, because she did not give him features as flexible, and frame as plastic as she gave to Garrick: what is great and solemn and sublime she has qualified him to express, and though her gifts, as such alone, had not been very various, they surely may be called extremely valuable: But I adhere to my conjecture.

Mr. Hunt says of Mr. Kemble, as Racine did of his own Athaliah—

Non in se crimen amoris habet.

Mr. Hunt is a nice observer, and very apt to be right: Mrs. Inchbald differs from him, and upon a question of that nature little likely to be wrong; how can we decide?

The ingenious writer of these Essays under my review expresses some disapprobation of a certain stiff and studied manner, which he remarks in Mr. Kemble, and observes that he is an actor even in the operation of taking out his handkerchief, when he is upon the stage. I can believe the fact to be as Mr. Hunt has stated it, but I do not quite agree with him in the comment, that he grounds upon it. I conceive it must depend upon the character, which Mr. Kemble represents, and the

situation he is in, whilst an action of this sort is introduced, whether his manner of performing it is, or is not, pedantic and improperly artificial. Heroes and kings may take out their handkerchiefs on the stage, but certainly not for that familiar purpose, which meaner characters would apply them to, whose noses had occasion for them. Mr. Kemble, as the representative of dignity, will of necessity dignify every movement, that fills up the action, and what is termed the bye-play of his part: He naturally will not allow himself to perform such common offices, as are above alluded to, like common men, but specifically and precisely as the individual would, whose image is in his mind, and whose minutest habits he would wish to make his own, so long as it may be his duty to reflect them. If he does no more than this, he does right, and I have not observed him apt to offend against character. No performer ever fashioned himself more studiously on reflection, and where I think him open to criticism is, when he suffers that reflection to be seen in representation, which only should precede it.

The part of Hamlet has generally been selected as the test of genius; I rather look upon it as the touch-stone of versatility. It is not always the best actor, who will play Hamlet best, but he who is most variously endowed; for that applauded drama is in fact a most irregular and parti-coloured composition. In parts and passages of that non-descript performance various actors have succeeded; several in many; Kemble in most; Garrick alone in all.

Mr. Hunt says, (and I quote it as a passage in his best manner)—

"That it must be the praise of a man, who shall possess a genius "capable of more than the art of acting, to personate Hamlet, the "gallant, the philosophical, the melancholy Hamlet, that amiable "Inconsistent, who talked when he should have acted, and acted "when he should not even have talked; who with a bosom wrung "with sensibility was unfeeling, and in his very passion for justice "unjust; who in his misery had leisure for ridicule and in his re-

"venge for benevolence; who in the most melancholy abstraction
"never lost the graces of mind or the elegancies of manner; natural
"in the midst of artifice, and estimable in the midst of error."

Upon this arduous part Mr. Kemble enters with attributes in some respects happier and more auspicious than those, with which Mr. Garrick was by nature armed. The dignity of the prince is in his form; the moody silence, meditative look, repulsive coldness and taunting ridicule cast on the creatures of the court, who besiege him, are peculiarly his own: in the judicious management of soliloquy, so little understood by some, he is not to be surpassed by any: in his interviews with the apparition of his father no actor can be more impressive; but in the graciousness of his manner with Horatio, Laertes and others; in his familiar condescension to the players, and especially in those delicate observances, which are not to be totally laid aside even in his sarcastic scene with Ophelia, and that more sharp and accusatory one with his mother, which were so finely and so curiously managed by Mr. Garrick, I must confess I have not received that perfect satisfaction from Mr. Kemble, which in other parts he has given me. When Hamlet in his interview with Ophelia, repeatedly vociferates—To a nunnery! to a nunnery! and quits the stage, Mr. Garrick tempered the unmanly insult in a manner that I cannot define, but by the effect it was evident that the sensibility of the actor operated as a softener to the asperity and coarseness of the poet. I have thought that in the stateliness of his deportment, and above all in the measured march and high-pitched tone of his declamation, Mr. Kemble did not sufficiently yield and accord himself to the fluctuations of that changeful character, which is throughout the drama *alter et idem*. But these are merely superficial opinions, that have floated in my mind, whilst I have been watching his performance, and they may very possibly be coloured by the prejudice of first impressions, and I feel how perfectly unfair it is to

bring actors now contending with the disadvantages of very different theatres and different audiences to comparisons with actors past. It is nugatory and frivolous, if done to flatter the living; unjust and cruel, if intended to disparage them. The present stage, whilst possessed of Mr. Kemble, has to boast of a performer, more deeply scientific, more learned and more laborious in his profession than is probably to be found in the annals of the British theatre. Although Garrick and Barry, Quin and Henderson, Woodward and O'Brien have passed off; although Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Abington and Miss Farren will be seen no more, the few old fellows like myself, who have lived through the whole list, and admired every one of them in their turns, would be the most illiberal of bigots, if we did not acknowledge the merit of those, who have succeeded to delight us, and support the undiminished credit of the stage.

I cannot quite take leave of Mr. Kemble without noticing Mr. Hunt's remarks upon orthoëpy, as applied to that elaborate performer: I confess I wish him not to be too precise in his pronunciation, but to content himself with speaking what is commonly called court-language, without too marked an aspiration of certain vowels. In some instances, that are urged against him, I think him right, yet I would recommend it to him to restrain his zeal for reforming customs, so long as they are sanctioned by the best societies, and are not inelegant. That he pronounces *aiches*, as those who employed the word, meant it to be spoken, I am well convinced: the metre puts it out of doubt; but it is not worth his while to be in a minority for a word—Let him say to himself--

——*Scio meliora, proboque;*
Deteriora sequor.——

Mr. Elliston, the Gracioso of Drury-Lane, always enterprising, and as various as a hero of a country company, has spirit to undertake and address to execute a great diversity of

parts. Those, which require little else than memory, he seizes with facility; but if deliberation, time and study shall be wanting, I cannot see where he will find those favours to bestow upon them. If he is not extravagantly fond of praise, I think he must be more than satisfied with the very fine things, which Mr. Hunt has said of him: I suspect he has a few failings, which it would be well to correct, but, lest he should not be quite as well pleased with advice, I shall forbear to obtrude it upon him. A man of lively parts is apt to catch at an apology for carelessness, and if you can inspire him with a high opinion of his genius, you may take no further pains about instruction; he will be sure enough to hold it in contempt. If genius may be said to consist in the variety of its operations without any regard to the dignity and importance of them, then may a maker of toys be called a man of more genius than the builder of a ship.

Endowed with an excellent and well-informed understanding, graced with a becoming person, and modest unassuming manners, the junior Mr. Kemble wants nothing but opportunities to display in new and more important parts the histrionic powers, which he possesses in no less degree than others of his family. As I am persuaded that this rising actor has too much real merit to disdain the advice of a judicious critic, I hope he has noticed Mr. Hunt's remark, and will correct his indolence, if indolence can fairly be imputed to him; but if he only wants animation in some unanimating under-characters, and possesses it to the full in such leading parts as Romeo and Jaffier, (which I am told is the case) it only proves that he is alive to good writing, and a lazy advocate in a lame cause and for an unworthy client. As his talents have been gradually expanding and improving from the first hour when he stepped upon the stage, I would advise him now, before he has the responsibility of a leader upon him, to lay out for excursive service, by which he may diversify his walk. No man can exactly foresee to what extent

the elasticity of talent may be stretched by the energy of ambition.

When Mr. Cooke is Richard, or Iago, or Sir Pertinax, he is in his proper post, and whilst he bears his faculties in steady poise, no actor **can surpass him.** He is then the main-prop of the drama he is engaged in; but should that main-prop totter, what disgrace can be greater than that of an actor so disabled, what resentment more justifiable than of an audience so disappointed!

Of Mr. Alexander Rae, now acting on the Dublin stage, I am glad to find that Mr. Hunt conceives favourably. What his advances may have been since he appeared in the summer-theatre I cannot say; but of a mind so well informed, so open to instruction and so totally devoid of self-conceit, as I believe his mind to be, I augur confidently and expect great produce.

High as my opinion of Mr. Dowton's abilities as an actor is known to be, and much as I regard him, it is enough for me to say that I am particularly gratified to find my opinion so flatteringly confirmed by the ingenious author of these Essays.

That so many comic actors and actresses, capable of doing justice to the best productions, have been seen to sacrifice their admirable talents to buffoonery and farce, is much to be regretted, and I cannot but agree with Mr. Hunt, that it has been evidently prejudicial to some amongst them of the higher order. Woodward I confess was a harlequin, and would jump through the dial-plate of a clock, but he would not grin through a halter. If more than that degree of spectacle and splendour, which is auxiliary to dramatic compositions, must be employed to meet the great outgoings of a theatre, there is no reasoning in the case. It is to be hoped however, that in the construction of the new and magnificent theatre now erected in Covent-Garden, care will be taken that the voices of the performers may have a fair chance to reach the ears of the audience; and as this is unquestionably the first thing

needful, there can be little fear of its being overlooked and neglected. Means may at the same time be taken to secure and guard the interior of the theatre from those unseemly noises and disorderly interruptions, that have been matter of such just complaint; and when the avenues and lobbies shall be kept free from those disgraceful scenes, which to every person that passed through them exhibited the licentiousness of a brothel, a great and very needful thing will be effected. The consequence of this reform will be, that in proportion to the respectability of the assembly, so will be that of the entertainment. Authors, who have been in the practice of writing to the galleries, must give place to those, who can address themselves to hearers of a purer taste; and actors, who, in compliment to those gallery-authors, have condescended to become buffoons, must recollect themselves and be comedians:

Much will depend upon the construction of this new theatre about to open, and still more upon the style and character, which the conductors shall give to its representations, and of what description the first novelties shall be, which they offer to the public. If the splendid pile be really meant to be a playhouse, and if song and scenery and show are to be employed as ornamental not as essential, then indeed, provided there be genius in the age to furnish dramas of true sterling worth, there seems no reason why nonsense should pass current, merely because it glitters.

That there is this genius in our contemporaries I cannot doubt, but in the fitness and capacity of those, who may be selected to pass judgment on their tenders to the stage, I have not the same confidence. This important task of deciding upon the elegibility of dramatic compositions offered to the stage has sometimes been confined to one, sometimes in the hands of a committee, and at other times so involved in mystery, that the candidate for acceptance knew not who were his judges, nor could easily find out the channel, through which to make his ap-

proaches to the secret tribunal. Now as it cannot be for the honour, or advantage, or repose of the conductor of a theatre, that discouragements should be thrown in the way of men of talents, who might otherwise be disposed to write for the stage, nothing seems more easy than to give promptitude and security to an intercourse between parties, who seem to have a common interest, and no real cause for disagreement.

The proprietor's object is to have a variety of dramatic novelties, and out of these to select such, as shall be judged most likely to attract the public and ensure success.

The man, who offers his production for the stage, naturally wishes and requires to be secured against the mortifying necessity of waiting for an answer tediously postponed, and perhaps after much solicitation at length discovering that his unhappy manuscript has been mislaid or lost: he can ill submit to have his offers treated, and his feelings tortured in this manner: he is undoubtedly entitled to receive a speedy and respectful answer, and has a right to know by whom his work has been read, and of course, who it is that is responsible for the judgment, that has been passed upon it.

If these positions are admitted, the remedy is obvious: the only thing wanting is to appoint the reader, and adjust the rules. What plea can any writer have for discontent, if a period were named for all offers to be made, and a time limited, within which all answers should be given? No one need subject himself to be announced as the author of a rejected piece, if he subscribed his direction and withheld his name. The accepted author only would be summoned to a revisal of his drama at a conference with the reader, who would be prepared to suggest whatever might be thought of to improve, and perfect it for representation, before the parts were cast, and it was recited in the Green-room.

Should it be asserted, that the eventual remuneration, which the stage holds forth, is encouragement enough for every man to write, that can write, I dissent from that assertion, belie-

ving, as I do, that there are many, with whom emolument is but a secondary object, who are fully qualified to write well and ably for the stage, and only want facility of access to it.

But if it only be contended, that, where the property is, the right of judgment ought to be, I think so too: therefore let the proprietor, who accounts himself competent to the labour and the duty of the task in question, undertake it, and adopt, if he shall see fit, or as far as he sees fit, the accommodating mode above proposed.

If he does not choose to undertake it in his own person, let some man be sought out, by experience, temper, punctuality and good manners fitted to conduct a business, which, however delicate and difficult it may be, would in my opinion, under prudent management, produce effects very highly favourable to the interests of theatrical property, the restoration of the legitimate drama, and to the general improvement of the taste and genius of the age we live in.

TRAVELLING SKETCHES IN RUSSIA AND SWEDEN, DURING THE YEARS 1805, 1806, 1807, 1808. BY ROBERT KER PORTER. *4to. pp.* 303, 296. 5*l.* 5*s.*—*Phillips, London.*

STERNE has said, that the efficient and final causes which induce idle people to leave their native country and travel abroad, are either infirmity of body, imbecility of mind, or inevitable necessity: that in the two first classes are included all those who travel by land or by water, labouring with pride, curiosity, vanity, or spleen, subdivided and combined *in infinitum;* and that every other description of travellers might be comprised under the head of delinquent, un-

fortunate, sentimental, or simple. Under one of these general divisions, but deserving a more particular specification, may be included another class, who, as Shakspeare says, are impelled to travel by,

> *Such wind as scatters young men through the world*
> *To seek their fortunes farther than at home,*
> *Where small experience grows.*

But since Shakspeare and Sterne wrote, another order of travellers, or rather a variety engrafted on one or other of the original species, has sprung up, which may be denominated 'the book-making tribe.' Yet as each of this tribe retains the specific character of the original class, on which the variety is so engrafted, there will still exist the distinct classes of inquisitive book-making travellers, lying book-making travellers, proud, vain, splenetic, necessitous, simple, or fortune-hunting book-making travellers, &c. &c. The reader, probably, long before he has accompanied the author of these sketches in Russia and Sweden to the end of his journey, will be able to determine his place and rank in this catalogue.

At first view, it might be imagined that there is no difference between a traveller who writes a book, and a book-maker who writes travels: a little reflection, however, will discover in what the distinction consists, and that it could not well be greater: in one case the book is the effect, in the other it is the cause. One only writes about what he sees in his travels, the other only travels to see what he shall write about. Some among this book-making class of travellers have lately found, that the furthest way about, is for them the nearest road to distinction; that, like snow-balls, their greatness increases in proportion to the distance they travel from home; and that they are most honoured where they are least known. Some who have disappeared for a season or two, have, when least expected, shone forth illustrious in gay quartos; and having by their

works, or some other means, won the bright meed of knighthood, are thenceforward distinguished as Sir John, Sir Richard, or Sir Robert.

It is necessary in some cases, to prevent disappointment, that a reader should know something of the character and situation of an author before he opens his book: a man, who, calling on a friend, had prepared himself only to meet a family party, might feel rather surprized and embarrassed on being suddenly shewn into a room full of fashionable company. It may be as well, therefore, to premise, that whatever respect, on account of their dignity, is due to knights in general, who publish their own exploits, a double measure is due to the author of these Sketches in Russia and Sweden; who has not only "been admitted, with all serious rites," "a knight commander, &c. &c. of the Equestrian order of "St. Joachim," (Vol. II. p. 149,) but "by the star of the "beauteous Queen Christina, the guide of love, and the order of "the Amaranth, the emblem of its never-dying brightness, "has been enlisted for ever, one of Beauty's vassals;" has been "proclaimed champion of the fair," and after "receiving, on his knees, from the hands of a beauteous lady, the "shining badge of his order, rose another leaf in the royal "wreath of Amaranth." (Vol. II. p. 227.) To the reader, who perhaps has hitherto known the author only by his Panoramas, or by the account of his life, published amongst memoirs of other public characters, by his friend and brother-knight Sir R. Phillips, and who, never suspecting his accession of dignity, might be disposed to treat his performance with as little ceremony as that of an ordinary person, this previous knowledge of his rank is the more necessary, as Sir Robert is rather jealous of his distinctions: for though he modestly professes, "not to value them for the little they confer, but as a witness "of that esteem having been adjudged to him by foreign na"tions, which will ever be his ambition to deserve in his own," (Vol. II. p. 146.) yet he speaks with true knightly indignation

of those, "who deem orders as a mere interchange of trinkets, "and attempt to turn chivalric distinctions into ridicule." He laments, that "the age of chivalry is gone by, when such insignia were prized beyond the wealth of worlds." "To laugh at "titles and customs of honour," says he, "is to laugh at "honour itself. This absurd contempt, or baser envy, is "beyond my understanding." (Vol. II. p. 225.) It would indeed be an ill-natured thing, if any of Sir Robert's readers were to envy him his honours, since this would be grudging him the only advantage or distinction he appears to have gained by his travels: and though he modestly confesses, that he considers, "*his spurs are to be won;*" and, in contemplation of future feats of chivalry, exclaims with Cæsar, "Happy was "Alexander who had arrived at the prize of his career, before "the Roman had started!" (Vol. II. p. 149.) it must not be imagined that, because honours are in great plenty in the North, they are to be had for nothing, or bought like Scotch degrees for a few shillings. But nothing can be more to the purpose on this subject, than an anecdote told by Sir Robert himself: his reflections on the occasion are peculiarly happy, and the reader of his work will feel their force and justness. (Vol. II. p. 96.)

And now the reader knows in what company he is to travel, he may prepare himself to attend the Knight on his journey as a faithful squire; and while Sir Robert is in a snug family-party with an emperor or empress, in familiar conversation with kings and queens, shaking hands with princes, or making love to a princess, he will have leisure and opportunity to make a few observations; keeping ever at respectful distance as gentle squire of knight-errant was wont in days of chivalry.

Anticipating, no doubt, the chivalric honours which awaited him in the North, Sir Robert, like his great precursor, the Knight of LaMancha, is ever in quest of adventures, and no sooner beholds the "immortalized city of Elsineur," than he is "eager "to traverse every part of the consecrated ground." Before

he has set foot on the shore, " he had already followed Ham-
" let every where, had measured the deep shadows of the
" platform, encountered the grey ghost of the royal Dane, had
" killed Polonius in the Queen's closet, and drowned poor
" Ophelia in the willowed stream." (Vol. I. p. 2.) This drown-
ing part of the adventure, it must be confessed, is rather an unknightly trick, particularly for an embryo knight of the order of Amaranth: but then it must be remembered, this is all in imagination; he neither meddles with ghost nor lady in reality. But, " his eye and mind are soon called back to the
" narrow foot-paths of dull matter of fact:" he seeks in vain at Elsineur " for decayed battlements and mouldering towers," and finds it " an Herculean toil to wade through that wilder-
" ness of filth," as he is pleased to term that city. His expectations meet with a no less mortifying disappointment at
" a place a mile from the town, that bears the name of Ham-
" let's garden," " but retains no relic of antient interest,
" excepting the tradition, which affirms that to be the spot
" where was enacted the tragedy which has been so gloriously
" immortalized by the genius of our great dramatic bard." Here, however, " considering himself in the very haunts of
" Shakspeare's Northern hero," Sir Robert lingers to communicate " a few interesting circumstances relating to him," which he has " gathered at the fountain-head," " from the
" very source whence our poet must have drawn the incidents
" of his tragedy." He means, " the annals of Denmark
" written by Saxo Grammaticus in the twelfth century." Now those, who have never met with any of the commentators on Shakspeare, and have therefore never heard of this same Saxo Grammaticus, will no doubt be much astonished at this proof of Sir Robert's sagacity and erudition. He says the work is in Latin, and supposing it not easy to be " met with," proceeds to " finish his account of Hamlet's garden with a short ab-
" stract from that prince's history." When he comes, how-
ever, to the scene between Hamlet and his mother, " the

"precise situation and circumstances of which, and even the "sentiments and the very words themselves," it seems, Shakspeare has borrowed from this antient author, Sir Robert no longer confines himself to abstract. The speech of Hamlet inspires him; and he says, "I have the more particularly "translated part of this speech, as it will shew you, in its "original state, the rough diamond which Shakspeare has "polished to so transcendant a brightness." (Vol. I. p. 7.) As he adds in a note, "the coarseness of this translation will be "pardoned, as it is *literal; otherwise than literal*, it would "be unexpressive of the manners it is intended to represent;" it may be as well first to exhibit the original Latin, which is not quite so difficult to be met with as Sir Robert seems to imagine.

"Quid, mulierum turpissima, gravissimi criminis dissimula-
"tionem falso lamenti genere expetis, quæ scorti more lasciviens,
"nefariam ac detestabilem tori conditionem secuta, viri tui inter-
"fectorem pleno incesti sinu amplecteris, et ei qui prolis tuæ
"parentem extinxerat, obscœnissimis blandimentorum illecebris
"adularis? Ita nempe equæ conjugum suorum victoribus maritan-
"tur: brutorum natura hæc est, ut in diversa passim conjugia
"rapiantur: hoc tibi exemplo prioris mariti memoriam exolevisse
"constat. Ego verò non ab re stolidi speciem gero, çùm haud
"dubitem, quin is qui fratrem oppresserit, in affines quoque pari
"crudelitate debacchaturus sit. Unde stoliditatis quam industriæ
"habitum amplecti præstat, et incolumitatis præsidium ab extremâ
"deliramentorum specie mutuavi. In animo tamen paternæ
"ultionis studium perseverat, sed rerum occasiones aucupor,
"temporum opportunitates opperior. Non idem omnibus locus
"competit. Contra obscurum immitemque animum altioribus
"ingenii modis uti convenit. Tibi verò supervacuum sit meam
"lamentari desipientiam, quæ tuam justiùs ignominiam deplorare
"debueras. Itaque non alienæ sed propriæ mentis vitium defleas
"necesse est. Cætera silere memineris."

Saxo. Grammat. Histor. Dan. Lib. iii. *p.* 51. *Edit.* 1644.

The following is the Knight's *literal* translation; the closeness of which is sufficient evidence that he has copied only from the original Latin, and has not consulted any German paraphrase.

"Hear me, most polluted woman! thou who art loathsome "from thy crimes and thy hypocrisy; whose very breath is impreg- "nated with the falsehood of thine heart! Thou, who only seemest "to lament one, who claims and deserves thy truest tears!— "Shame!—by what a course of folly hast thou become a common "whore! Lasciviously and unlawfully holding in thy detestable "soul, conditions with thy husband's murderer—embracing in "incest this bosom fiend, and staining, with him, the sacred "bed of that king whose son will avenge his blood, and destroy all "the obscene allurements to thy execrable adultery, in the object "of thy brutal passion. Granted, thou *mare-mated*, that thy "victory is gained; that thou art now linked to the sun of thy let- "chery—nature of brutes! and like them ye lose no moments of "gratification, impelled but by your beastly wishes.—I had for- "got---to one worn out and self-consumed by much enjoyment, "these examples are excellent, and to a married woman's mind, "most suitable.---Aye, forsooth, it must be preferable too, to "carry on such warm desires as far as they will extend,---that "she should be a husband's brother's wife!---and to add yet unto "its pleasures, she must not stand to gain the foul accomplish- "ment, but by the bearing down her wedded lord. Thou dam of "cruelty! Yes, I have played the mad-man, raved! With "this cloak of willing dulness I have wrapped about my reason; "it is my guard, while I watch to spring upon my prey. My soul "at every hour calls aloud for a murdered father's revenge. The "moment is now arrived. I waited the opportunity, and time "has now given what I so impatiently desired, though, alas! not in "all deserving it. Dwell not, mother, on the dark and secret "causes which actuated thy son's apparent madness; wail not for "my wild ravings, nor the actions of my insanity: turn thy la- "mentations on thyself; bemoan thine own infamy, and thine own "deformed heart.—Look to thyself!—deny not thy depravity "and faultiness; for these, thy sorrow is necessary indeed.— "Tear such foul weeds from thy bosom, mother, and check the "furor of thy crimes.—Thou hast once walked in the light of "virtue, call back to your remembrance its serenity, its joys: "turn to its pure flame, and once more let thy son see it beam "upon his mother's face." (Vol. I. p. 7.)

It is not easy to say which is most conspicuous on this occasion, the learning of the worthy Knight, or that of the Edinburgh Reviewer, who observes that Sir Robert "translates" (call you this translating?) "some passages from Saxo "Grammaticus, to which Shakspeare seems to have been "indebted;" and adds, "They are curious, though not very

"delicate: but one does not quite see why that author, as "well as Shakspeare, could not have been perused in Eng- "land." (*Edin. Rev.* No. xxvii. p. 171.) One certainly does not quite see why the Edinburgh Reviewer might not as well read authors before he undertakes to pass opinions on them.

Leaving Elsineur, "the accidental disagreeables of that "city were soon forgotten in the natural beauties of the "view."

"The shore, all along the Danish side, presents the most lovely "stretch of landscape I ever beheld. Mount Edgecumbe is look- "ed upon as the paradise of England: and what Mount Edge- "cumbe is in one spot only, so appears the whole of Denmark "from Elsineur to Copenhagen. The land is high, and undula- "ting in various romantic and sublime forms. Rich woods, "broken by park-like openings and verdant pastures, and inter- "spersed with country-houses and villages for an extent of twenty- "three miles, form the clothing of these beautiful hills. A stri- "king contrast to the black and naked line of the opposite coast." (Vol. I. p. 13.)

On landing at Constradt, where he "seemed in a new "region, and every sense was called forth to wonder and "exercise," Sir Robert "receives many kindnesses from the "governor, Admiral Hennacoff;" so eager were the great to salute him even on the confines of Russia! Bidding adieu to this benevolent man, he embarks on the Neva; and during his voyage, the boatmen, to whom he gives "a glass "or two of brandy to amuse them," entertain him in return by singing with much simplicity and ease several of their national airs.

"The strains are wild, and possess many pleasing and melan- "choly passages: yet the whole bore a strong tone of monotony "and abruptness. The one you heard (given to me by the Prince "de Courland while in England) is sufficient to convey a very just "idea of the general character of these northern songs." (Vol. I. p. 18.)

Arriving at St. Petersburgh, Sir Robert can scarcely find words to express his admiration of its magnificence.

"Such grandeur and symmetry in building, I never before beheld in any of the different capitals to which my fondness for travel has conducted me. Every house seems a palace, and every palace a city." (Vol. I. p. 19.)

He then proceeds to give an animated and picturesque description of those parts of the city most worthy notice. But there is one point in which he and Mr. Coxe are at direct variance. Sir Robert says,

"The dingy hue of bricks, or the frippery of plaister, seldom offends the eye in this noble city. Turn where you will, rise immense fabrics of granite." (Vol. I. p. 20.)

While Mr. Coxe asserts, that

"The brick houses are ornamented with a white stucco, which has led several travellers to say, that they are built of stone; whereas, unless I am greatly mistaken, there are only two stone structures in all Petersburgh!" *Coxe's Travels into Russia*, &c. Vol. II. p. 267. *Edit.* 1787.

Now unless it can be supposed that the city has been entirely rebuilt since the time that Mr. Coxe was there, it is not easy to account for these opposite statements.

Among the new works carrying on, Sir Robert describes a Metropolitan church, which when completed, he has no doubt, "will be a very powerful rival to the two great cathedrals of Rome and London." The architect of this great design was formerly a slave of Count Strogonoff, but enfranchised by that nobleman out of respect to his talents. It seems that the application of mechanism to the purpose of abridging human labour, is here little understood or encouraged. "All difficulties are overcome by human exertions alone! Multitudes of labourers come some thousand versts from the interior, to work during the summer season, and when the frost sets in, retire thither again."

Sir Robert next proceeds to give some account of the paintings in the hermitage, but there is little of novelty or interest in his remarks. At the Taurida palace he is in raptures with a statue of Venus, which he prefers to the Venus de Medici, and describes *con amore* the other classic treasures which are there deposited. He leads his reader also across the Neva, to the Institution for the Encouragement of the Arts; thinks sculpture and architecture in a very promising state, but that there is a very manifest want of genius for painting. In all these places, however, his brother-knight Sir John Carr has been before him; and Sir Robert always speaks of his work with true knightly courtesy.

As in the days of chivalry, piety was considered no less necessary than valour to form the character of a Christian knight, Sir Robert is resolved to shew that he is not deficient in this respect. Indeed, he misses no opportunity of displaying his skill in wielding the weapons of Theology; even the far-famed Sir Hudibras might have feared a conflict with him. Without hesitation, he undertakes to unveil the mysteries of the Greek church, for the amusement of his military friend, to whom all the letters, of which the two volumes consist, are stated to have been addressed. He owns, indeed, that "much time is required, much reading, and many "conversations with the intelligent ministers of the Greek "church, to gain any correct idea of its institutions;" (Vol. I. p. 97.) but with a noble confidence in his own powers, and a most courageous contempt for *correct ideas*, he does not shrink from the toil. And here again it would neither be just to Sir Robert nor the public, to pass unnoticed the supercilious observation of the Edinburgh Reviewer.

"We say nothing of the account of the Greek church too—a subject very little adapted to such superficial writers as this author." Edin. Rev. xxvii. p. 175.

If the Reviewer had looked a little closer into the matter, he would have given Sir Robert credit for the depth and

accuracy of his researches; which are sufficiently evinced by his perfect agreement with the learned Dr. King: an agreement so very remarkable indeed, that the Knight not only does not say a single thing, which is not to be found in the Doctor's "Ceremonies of the Greek Church," but he generally says it in the very same words.

This resemblance extends to the most trifling particulars. Thus the Doctor sets out with observing, "As the Greek church is of the highest antiquity, so," &c.; while the Knight says, "As the church in question is of higher anti-"quity, than any other distinction amongst Christians, so," &c. (Vol. I. p. 69.) Again the Doctor, at the end of his account of *Confession*, says, "I shall conclude this article with the ingenious remark of Dr. Covell." The very same remark is thus prefaced on the very same occasion by the Knight. "I cannot deny myself the pleasure of repeating "an observation of Dr. Covell's,"—(Vol. I. p. 77.) It is certainly rather singular that both Knight and Doctor should hit on the same remark, but such things may happen sometimes by accident. Indeed Sir Robert appears to have pursued, accidentally no doubt, the very same track which the Doctor had traversed before him, and meets with the same guides. Thus he mentions the work of Peter Mogilas, intitled, "A confession of the catholic and apostolic faith of "the Greeks and Russians," and tells his friend that he "may find it in Greek or Latin"—(Vol. I. p. 76). Now it is very probable that he might have gained some credit for this display of erudition, if unfortunately Dr. King had not on the same occasion given some account of the work of this same Peter Mogilas, and added in a note, "An edition of this work in Greek, Latin, and German, was printed at Breslaw, 1751." In one respect, however, the superior address of the Knight is apparent; while the Doctor states, that "the ser-"vice of the Greek church is so long and complicated, that "it is very difficult to give a clear account of it, and still

"more difficult to give a short one," and occupies a large quarto volume with his description; Sir Robert, with that vigour of compression, which is the surest mark of genius, dispatches church, priests, monks, and nuns, in three letters!

The winter sets in during the Knight's stay at St. Petersburgh, and affords him an opportunity of describing the appearance of the natives at that season, and the sports on the frozen Neva: and this he does with a considerable degree of spirit. There is nothing new, indeed, in his picture, but it shews the eye of a painter, if Sir Robert will allow the expression: every object is placed in the most picturesque point of view. But in the splendour of the Russian court, he soon loses sight of all inferior objects. He feels it necessary to account for his having been two months in the capital of the Emperor of all the Russias, without calling on him. "The brave Alexander," it seems, was with his army on the frontiers.

"He was set out," says Sir Robert, "before my arrival; "hence I have not yet had the happiness of paying my *personal* "*obeisances* to so much true imperial dignity. In the course of "a few days, I hope to be in presence with the fair of his illus- "trious family."—(Vol. I. p. 129.)

Accordingly the very next letter commences with these words; "I have been at court." The young Empress was "the only one of the imperial family present."

"Her person is not tall, yet it is graceful and elegantly pro- "portioned; and the air of it is tender and interesting. Her "eyes are soft and blue; her complexion touchingly delicate.—— "As she passed through the long line of military nobles, she "honoured *us (i. e. us military nobles)* with the most smiling "affability; and her small regular features expressed a soft "urbanity, almost approaching timidity. Her voice is peculiarly "melodious."—(Vol. I. p. 130, 131.)

Soon after this, the Emperor returns from his defeated armies, and Sir Robert is then formally presented at court, where it appears, he is soon received by every member of the

Imperial family on the most intimate footing. He gives a very favourable sketch of the figure and manners of the "illustrious," "invaluable" Alexander: nor, in his admiration of the son, does he forget the mother:—

"The Dowager Empress, who is of a Pallas form and mien, is "a most admirable woman. I have before given you an idea of "her numerous charities. She is exquisitely accomplished; and "possesses a courtesy of address that is undescribable. To her "fair hand I am indebted for a diamond, which, in devotion to "her virtues, I shall ever wear next my heart."—(Vol. I. p. 149.)

This is quite in the style of a loyal and courteous knight; but the circumstance of this pledge of royal favour might have been rendered more interesting, if Sir Robert had stated on what occasion it was bestowed, or in reward of what services it was given. That he has not done so must ever be a subject of regret with those who love to contemplate noble actions, and to see them royally rewarded.

Among the festivities, in which he is engaged, he takes occasion to describe the ice-hills constructed on the Neva, and the ceremony of blessing the waters, which he concludes right piously with a prayer. Those who have read fuller accounts of these things in Coxe and King, will think perhaps that he might have spared himself the trouble.

Having run round the whole circle of Russian entertainments, Sir Robert continues no longer at St. Petersburgh, than just to give the patterns of the uniforms of Alexander's motley troops, and to describe their "nicely blacked mustaccios" and "enormous whitened whiskers;" and then, in midwinter, departs for Mosco. The city of Twer, lying in his road, is a place of too much consequence to be passed through unnoticed. Now, whether there is something in the air of Twer, which inspires one exclusive set of ideas, and one exclusive form of words, those only who have been there can tell: but certain it is, that they who read Sir Robert's account, (Vol. I. p. 182.) and that of Mr. Coxe, (*Travels into*

Russia, &c. Vol. II. p. 203, 204, Edit. 1787.) who had been at Twer before him, must suppose the existence of some such influence, unless there can be imagined any other way, by which the exact resemblance which one description bears to the other, could have been produced. Nor is it only in their account of the place that the Knight and the Clerk agree; their adventures there are exactly alike. The carriage of Mr. Coxe, which had broken down, is sent to a smith at Twer, who, instead of mending it, only makes it worse: Sir Robert is equally unfortunate, but infinitely more witty. His barouche breaks down at Twer, and is mended there; but so clumsily, that, to use his own words, it soon

"Shewed symptoms of disunion again, and at the village of "Klin, our servants had the extraordinary pleasure of another "*summer*-set in the *snow!*"—(Vol. I. p. 184.)

It would seem proper, therefore, that future gazetteers should, in addition to their present account of Twer, note that it is a place famous for the breaking down of carriages, and bad smiths. The same cause, whatever it be, that produces this perfect sympathy between the Knight and the Clerk, operates as long as they continue in the vicinity of Twer. The one observes, that it is necessary to cudgel the Russian boors into obedience; the other, more circumstantial, tells a long story in support of the maxim. Mr. Coxe describes the interior of a Russian cottage, and his description is so extremely faithful, that Sir Robert, in a sketch, which he has illustrated by his pencil, has been compelled almost to use the very same words. But it would not, perhaps, be right to point out any further instances of this extraordinary family-likeness in the productions of the Knight and the Clerk, lest ill-natured people should suspect, that it could not have happened by chance: which might tend to affect the legitimacy of Sir Robert's offspring, and his title to their paternity.

At length the traveller arrives at Mosco:—fit scene for

errant-knight, where there are nought but gorgeous castles, and lords, and princes, and peerless dames, and dwarfs, and giants, and splendid feasts, and fairy revels. But though "pleasure wooes him in as many shapes as ever Armida "assumed to charm away the wits of the doughty Rinaldo," (Vol. I. p. 210,) Sir Robert is happily so secure by nature on this point, that he must be very acute indeed who should discover, that he has less wit during his stay at Mosco, than at any other period of his errantry. Here, as elsewhere, the noble and the fair contend who most shall do him homage: and on one occasion, when he is invited by the young Countess Orloff to a sumptuous banquet, given on her birth-day, he makes a notable discovery, which the invention of Cervantes has not exceeded.

"Music, vocal and instrumental, resounded from all sides: "and when the health of the lady was drunk, a flourish of kettle-"drums and trumpets rent the air, and peals of ordnance (to those "who saw them not) reduced by their thunder the roar of festivity "to the murmuring of distant merry-making.

"I happened," continues the Knight, who appears to have run about the palace as familiarly as any favourite domestic animal, "to be gone into an adjoining room at the moment of one of these "explosions, and, most unluckily for their future effect on my "senses, got a *peep behind the curtain*. I found that these "repeated, seeming discharges of cannon, were produced by an "accumulation of *cows' bladders* distended with wind, and rapid-"ly laid in succession on large blocks of wood, where, with the "velocity of a steam-engine, they were burst at once by the "action of a ponderous mould or mallet."—(Vol. I. p. 212.)

At this feast, which, to distinguish it from the many others that were rendered illustrious by the presence of the Knight, may be called *the feast of Cow-bladders*, he meets with a paragon of beauty, who proves "his guiding star through all "the mazes of that happy festival." This naturally leads him to the subject of kissing; which, it seems, is reduced "to a sort of system in this country, and arranged in classes." Here he is in his proper field, and displays to advantage his

learning and peculiar felicity of illustration. The following specimen is inimitable:

"No bearded boor meets his fellow, but forty smacks are "heard, as though each were sucking cyder through a vent-peg!" (Vol. I. p. 215.)

During his residence at Mosco, Sir Robert takes occasion to make various remarks on the state of slavery in Russia, on the abolition of capital punishments throughout the empire, and on the use of the knout, of which instrument, and the mode of using it, he gives a minute description. This part of the work, though it will not surprize the reader by its originality of information, nor too severely exercise his judgment by its profundity or acuteness of reflection, will at least confirm the writer's title to the approbation and esteem of those, who set a higher value on the virtues of the heart than on orders of knighthood.

Curiosity leads him to visit the public baths, of which various travellers have given such various accounts: and here he beholds the Russian fair, "sporting about like porpoises," and "swimming like geese," without the slightest veil to hide their natural unloveliness: a scene too immodest for the chaste eyes of loyal knight; but it cannot be said he paints it *con amore*. He is much better pleased, when "dining with "Count P——," "receiving the most gratifying attentions "from Prince U—— or Prince V——," when "invited by "Prince W——," so "eminent for learning and talents, to "go down to his country residence," or when "his military "curiosity is politely gratified by Prince G——." Indeed, as Sir Robert had not, at this time, even received his "diploma "of knighthood," nothing could possibly be more gratifying than the attentions which were so universally paid to him by the most illustrious personages, since they could be considered only as a just tribute to his personal worth. To the governor-general of Mosco, he was "indebted for a thousand

" marks of friendship," and more especially for " a pelisse of " the rarest and most costly materials, being lined with the " skins of unborn lambs." On his visiting a prison, " the " guard turns out and presents arms." The princess Dashcoff, " one of the most celebrated women in history, the friend " of Catharine the Great," who from " a patriotic zeal for " her country, concealed her charms under a helmet, and " braced her beautiful bosom in steel," " does him the honour " to have a few auxiliary regiments reviewed before him." All this is the more extraordinary, as Sir Robert omits to mention what feats of arms he had performed to overshadow his reputation as an artist; and yet it should seem, from his own statement, that, previous to his reception among the nobles of Russia, it must have been necessary for him to *sink the painter*.

" Owing to the peculiar constitution of this empire, the arts " and sciences are, in general, but secondary objects in the " minds of the natives. The nobles deem no profession honourable, but that of arms. Ambition would be thought to stoop, " if it sought any celebrity from excelling by the chissel, the " pencil, or the pen: hence, the finest talents among the high-born are never directed towards any of these points. Military " glory is all their aim:—the study of the arts and sciences is " left to slaves; or at best to slaves made free."—(Vol. I. p. 133.)

Sir Robert, it is true, was not entirely without pretensions to military rank; he had borne some commission in the Middlesex militia. But then again it appears, that none but officers of high rank are at all noticed by such worshipful society as he mingled with familiarly. This is placed beyond question on an occasion, when, accompanied by a friend, he accepts an invitation from Prince G——, who was encamped at a short distance from Mosco.

" We passed," says he, " the remainder of the evening with " the Prince, who gave us a very elegant supper, and treated us " with a respect and attention which made a comparison the more " extreme, that I could not help drawing: I mean the *immense*

" *distance* at which personages of his rank hold even the officers " serving under them. While we sat round the table, the sub- " alterns and captains of his regiment *stood at one end*, and in " that position partook of the repast. As it is the custom of the " country, they did not appear humiliated; but enjoyed their " share of the passing dishes with sufficient *goût* and good humour." (Vol. I. p. 274.)

It was certainly, therefore, not on account of his talents as an artist, nor his commission in the militia, that the Knight was received with such distinguished honour by the Princes and Imperial family of the Russian empire. Whatever pretensions he might have of a higher nature, however, the reader is left to guess, as Sir Robert conceals them with the most scrupulous modesty: a very commendable and knightly quality. But it may not perhaps be entirely out of place to observe, that other travellers have sometimes been honoured by similar distinctions, through a misapprehension of their real rank. Acerbi, with considerable naïveté, gives, among the table of contents of his second volume, chap. xi. the following head; " *Great hospitality and attention—Advantage* " *of being mistaken for a Prince in travelling!*"—As Sir Robert drops no hint of any such mistake being made with respect to himself, except on one occasion, nothing of the sort is to be presumed: and after all, it is of little importance to the public, to know the reasons of this singular exception in his favour: he might have produced cards of invitation from every prince in the North, and no one would have inquired how he came by them, if it did not appear from the frequency with which he brings the subject forward, and the delight with which he dwells on it, that he wishes to attract the public attention particularly to this one point, as of higher importance and interest than any other, which he has had occasion to touch on, in the course of his travels; as the principal object, in fact, to which every thing else is only to be considered subordinate and incident. It will not be thought strange, therefore, if, in this review, more attention

should seem to be paid to Sir Robert himself, than to his work: he at least will not be surprized, because he knows the observance due to rank, and that,

"What great ones do, the less will prattle of."

Summer having driven the nobles from Mosco, the Knight exclaims, "What then have I to do in this place!" and instantly sets off for St. Petersburgh. In his way he visits the monastery of the New Jerusalem, built by the celebrated Nichon, in imitation of the Holy Sepulchre in Palestine. "During his walk round the walls, he fortunately encounters "the archimandrite, or abbot, who accosts him with polite-"ness, and afterwards shews him an attention that was quite "unexampled."—(Vol. I. p. 287.) His account of this interesting place is very slight: he mentions some portraits of the founder, but he does not say a word about the *triple-handed* Virgin, an object of such high veneration there. It is to be regretted, that he lost the opportunity of comparing the miraculous hand with those of mortal painting: his opinion, as an artist, on the comparative merit of the two styles, would have been interesting, and at least quite as entertaining, and rather more in place, than his learned defence of King David, "the sweet songster of Israel."

On his return to St. Petersburgh, Sir Robert conducts his reader from one nobleman's seat to another, and points out with much taste, whatever he finds in them worthy of admiration: he then leads him back in a gentle amble to Mosco, and returns in the same pace to St. Petersburgh. If his follower should have chanced to fall asleep by the way, on his reaching this last city, he will be wakened by the loud larum of war. The Knight finds a French general there as ambassador.

"You will be surprized," says he, "that I should be unable "to say much of the French general, from my own personal "knowledge: he possessed no magnetic powers over me, and

"therefore I kept as due a distance as I liked."—(Vol. II. p. 73.)

From the change, however, which takes place in the disposition of Russia towards England, Sir Robert feels it to be his duty to apply for passports; and having obtained them, he continues no longer at St. Petersburgh, than "to take his "leave of the Imperial head of the court, in which he had "experienced so much kindness." Passing rapidly through Finland, he has not opportunity to do much more than give a dry list of the posts, at which he changed horses: but the perils and miseries of his journey, in mid-winter, among the isles of Bothnia, are forcibly painted; and the manners of the inhabitants of those inhospitable regions are sketched with a masterly hand.

Arriving at Stockholm, fortunately in time to witness the ceremony of opening the statue of Gustavus III, the Knight takes occasion to bestow some very high encomiums on that monarch, and seems scarcely satisfied with the tortures, which Ankerstromm endured on account of his assassination. But he is put still more out of temper, by a blunder of his "stupid "coachman," in consequence of which, notwithstanding the English ambassador had proposed to present him to the King and Queen, he has "the mortification of making his first bow "to their Majesties in a crowd." As the present unfortunate situation of these illustrious personages, renders whatever relates to them particularly interesting, the reader will not be displeased with contemplating their portraits as drawn by the Knight.

"Gustavus bears a striking resemblance to the best portraits of "Charles the Twelfth; and seems not to neglect the addition of "similar habiliments. For really at the first glance, you might "almost imagine the picture of his renowned ancestor had walked "from its canvass. He is thin, though well made; about the middle "stature, pale, and with eyes whose eagle beams strike with the "force of lightning: look at them, and while he is in thought, "they appear remarkably calm and sweet; but when he looks at "you and speaks, the vivacity of his manner and the brilliancy of

"his countenance are beyond description. His mouth is well-
"shaped, with small mustaccios on his upper lip, and his hair,
"which is cropped and without powder, is combed up from his
"forehead.

"Her Majesty is most interestingly beautiful; very much re-
"sembling her sister, the Empress of Russia. She is fair with
"expressive blue eyes. Her features are fine; but the affability
"of her countenance, her smile, and engaging air, independently
"of other charms, would be sufficient to fascinate every heart
"almost to forget she was a Queen, in her loveliness as a woman."
(Vol. II. p. 132.)

Whether it is from his inordinate admiration of nobility, that Sir Robert is disposed to appropriate to nobles whatever is beautiful or admirable, it should at least seem necessary to suppose some such disposition, in order to account for a curious blunder he has made on a subject, which it was natural to expect he would have understood even better than the laws and ordinances of chivalry. It respects one of the most celebrated works of the admirable Sergal, which is placed in the church built at Stockholm by Adolphus Frederic.

"A little to the right of the altar," says Sir Robert, "is a
"monument, erected in the year 1777, to the memory of a *noble-*
"*man* who died in 1560. It is of bronze, and surpasses almost
"every specimen of the kind I have seen: in short, I cannot speak
"too highly of the design, or sufficiently eulogize the undescri-
"bable beauty of its expression. It is an angel holding up in his
"left hand *the torch of life*, which is *extinguished:* with his
"right he unveils the world by raising a piece of drapery: em-
"blematic, I suppose, that death, while it destroys our mortal
"fires, opens the universe to the sight of our unembodied spirit."
(Vol. II. p. 142.)

It is a pity that the Knight's admiration of this sublime piece of art did not induce him to examine it a little more attentively: he would then perhaps have discovered, that it is not the monument of a nobleman, who died in 1560, but the cenotaph of the philosopher, Des Cartes, who having been invited to Stockholm by Christina, died there in 1650: and if Sir

Robert had looked nearer, he would have seen, that the torch is not extinguished, but blazes sufficiently to destroy his fanciful allegory. Coxe, with his usual accuracy, has described the monument in the following words :—

"Above is the medallion of Des Cartes, and beneath an angel taking a veil from the globe, and *illuminating* it with a torch; a sublime idea, simply expressing the effect of philosophy in enlightening the human race, but weakened by the angel's pointing to 'Stockholm,' written in golden characters." *Coxe, Travels in Russia, &c.* Vol. IV. p. 76.

Having procured letters of introduction to the Archbishop of Upsal, Sir Robert proceeds to that university, and amongst the other curiosities deposited there, examines the famous *Codex Argenteus*. The ease with which he gets rid of all the learned disputes respecting this curious volume, is very edifying. The decisive manner, indeed, in which he pronounces it to be a printed translation of the four Evangelists into Mesogothic by Ulphilas, thus settling at once three disputed points without ceremony, leaves the reader no room to doubt, that he either knows the Mæsogothic language and character as well as his own, the distinguishing characteristics of the style of Ulphilas, and the mode of printing in the middle of the fourth century, or that he knows nothing at all about the matter. Which opinion should be adopted, may, perhaps, be determined by his assertion, that the existence of this volume was not known, while it continued in the library of Werden; and that being removed to Prague, it fell into the hands of Count Koningsmarc, who gave it to Vossius :—an assertion certainly rather hardy, since, it is well known that, while the volume continued in the library of Werden, Anthony Marillon extracted from it some passages, which were inserted in a Commentary on the Gothic Alphabet published by Bonaventura Vulcanius; and that soon afterwards Arnold Mercator transcribed also a few verses, which Gruter gave to the world in his *Inscriptiones Antiquæ:* and it has been hitherto understood, that when Count Koningsmarc got pos-

session of the book at Prague, he gave it to Queen Christina, from whose library Vossius is supposed to have stolen it. But the facility with which Sir Robert divides, with his knightly blade, these Gordian-knots of history, is truly admirable. He has no sooner drawn on his hand the bloody glove of Charles XII. than he becomes perfectly acquainted with the manner of his death, and is as certain of his having been assassinated, as if he had himself been the assassin.

In the course of an excursion from Stockholm, he descends into the mines of Dunamora, Sala, and Fahlun ; and none who have visited those dismal regions before him, have so well painted their gloomy horrors, and the savagely picturesque appearance of their inhabitants. When in the mountains of Dalecarlia, it was natural that he should visit every spot where any memorials of Gustavus Vasa were to be seen ; nor is it to be wondered at, that the enthusiastic admiration, with which he evidently contemplates great and generous actions, should lead him to repeat the well-known story of the preservation of that illustrious patriot by the wife of the traitor Peterson ; but it certainly is rather extraordinary that he should have dressed it up so well as to pass it for new upon the Edinburgh Reviewer.

At length Sir Robert resolves to visit his native shores, but royalty follows him even to the place of his embarkation. The Queen of France, together with the Duke and Duchess d'Angoulême, arrives at Göttenburgh, and he is immediately presented by the Comte de Damas. All "cold formalities of "ceremony are most condescendingly waved, they make him "sit by them as a friend :" and while he takes from the Duke the commands with which he honours him for England, he is happy to unite his respect for the Prince with the devoted affection of a friend !

And now, having attended the Knight during all his wanderings, the reader may sit down and consider how much he has added to his stock of knowledge by his Travels. It is certain

that he has been led through the whole alphabet nearly of princely letters, and that he has encountered some dozen of puns, which undoubtedly he would never have met elsewhere. Sir Robert, indeed, has said that his production is not to be considered as "the studied work of an author "bringing forward deep researches, valuable discoveries, and "consequential observations, but the familiar correspondence "of a friend, noticing the manners of the people with "whom he associates, their fashions, their amusements, the "sentiments of the day; and mingling with these a few "occurrences happening to himself, and the reflections to "which they give rise." (*Pref.* p. v.) Now upon this, some people would observe, "that a work really of this description, and written by any one possessing a common degree of curiosity and discrimination, must be particularly valuable and interesting; because, in a familiar correspondence, originality at least of information and remark might be expected." But it is to be apprehended that this merit will not be readily allowed to Sir Robert. Some may be apt to think that, in general, he has rather trusted to his memory than his own observation; and that where he has ventured without that guide, he has sometimes unfortunately wandered: and then it may be suspected, that, however correct his memory may be, it would be much better to refer at once to the works which he retails. It will not be denied, however, that, in his progress, Sir Robert has collected some stories, and adopted some opinions, which, though they are to be found in Olearius, and authors of his class, and are therefore not absolutely original, yet have been so long rejected by graver writers, that they have a sort of Monmouth-street gloss in them, a kind of second-hand novelty. But he has himself given the best account of his work that can be required. "He "had engaged to accompany his drawings with some explana-"tions:" a book was therefore to be made, of such materials as were at hand, and it was made accordingly.

GERTRUDE OF WYOMING; A PENSYLVANIAN TALE: AND OTHER POEMS. BY THOMAS CAMPBELL, AUTHOR OF THE *PLEASURES OF HOPE*, &c. *4to. pp.* 134.—*1l. 5s.—Longman.*

THE monthly publications, as they undertake to criticize every thing, may easily furnish a greater variety of amusement, than it is possible to provide in a Quarterly work, like the London Review. But the Quarterly works may be fairly expected to supply in weight, what they want in number; and to present an account more than usually ample of those authors who have excited discussion in their day, or in anywise influenced the public taste. Wherefore it frequently becomes expedient to consider, not only the volumes immediately under examination, but the author's literary character, the foundations that support it, and the general effects which it has produced.

As this has not yet been done with respect to Mr. Campbell, those numerous readers who, being very indolent or very busy, derive their whole acquaintance with modern literature from the popular Reviews, even now know nothing belonging to him, except his name, and this last poem of Gertrude. But by any just review of Gertrude, his genius will be most unfairly estimated: his other works must be cited, in order to convince impartial readers, that in truth he is a poet of the finest fancy, of the tenderest feeling, of the liveliest eloquence, and of the noblest sublimity. Such phrases of eulogium may appear excessive; but when the discussion of Gertude is dispatched, these, and even more, shall be substantiated by ample evidence, even in their most precise signification. The recommendation that the following pages will give, can be only a feeble one; but they may fall into the hands of persons who have never studied his

works for themselves, and his fame may receive some service, though that service be but a little.

Gertrude of Wyoming has been forced into some kind of reputation, by a party, important alike from their literary talents and their social influence. How far the cause may have been promoted by the partiality of friendship, how far by the crafty hope of depreciating certain rival productions, and how far by the still more insidious desire of shifting Mr. Campbell's fame from the immoveable basis of his former work to the frail foundation of this ordinary poem, Reviewers have no commission to enquire. Yet, though they may feel it irregular to search into private motives, they are surely free to examine, how far an unsound taste may have concurred to so undue a commendation: for taste is clearly a matter of public interest, and public cognizance.

Independently then of all personal considerations, the principal cause of success appears to have been that air of classical regularity which pervades the style, and characterizes the general effect. The workmanship, though exceedingly defective, contains many evidences that the approved examples of poetry have been consulted. The language has little affectation of obsolete phraseology: the metre is at least perfectly regular: the whole style is free from every thing barbarous or childish: and the verses, in general, stiff and unpleasing as they often are, have yet in their deportment a certain correctness, that indicates their breeding to be of the old school. Now if there could ever be a season peculiarly favourable to the production of a work written according to the good primitive models, that season was certainly the moment when Gertrude appeared; because, from the circumstances of the times, the critics were disposed to welcome any thing, not absolutely wretched, that came in the simple shape of the antient favourites. During a great many years, amusing and fanciful works had been starting in rapid succession, each more extraordinary than its predecessors. The general voice

had cried loudly for originality, and originality had been poured into the market. The flowery prettinesses of the Della-Cruscans, the strange ardours of the German sentimentalists, the horrors of the spectral poets, the trifles of the nursery-versifiers, the rude genius of the minstrels, the morality of the methodistical novelists, all were received with enthusiasm, because, together with a greater or less proportion of merit, each possessed a manner, really new, or old enough to appear so. But of late, people have suddenly found out, that originality of manner is not precisely synonymous with perfection, and that regular and approved principles are at least as good as any of the new-fangled modes. So the popular tide, which, like other tides, is governed by the moon, has now begun as precipitately to flow up to the established marks, as of late it ebbed away from them. Common sense, to be sure, declares, that merit is not the necessary companion of a legitimate style, though the legitimate style is the best possible companion of merit; but the critics do not pause to consider this: their ardent chiefs, seized with a loathing of modern eccentricities, enthusiastically extol an indifferent poem, merely because it is written upon rational principles. The powerful stimulants that were so long administered, have left a sickly exhaustion behind: the demand at present is not for the most nutritious, but for the mildest diet: and the intellectual taste, made feverish with drams, is delighted with a weaker beverage than would be welcome if the system were properly braced.

The literary guides will never be believed, while each new leader alters the course, and impeaches all those who have gone before him. A few years ago, the zeal of criticism canonized the vices of anomalous originality: and now, that zeal accepts the virtues of regularity in full of almost every other merit. This is the hour of a poetical restoration: the mischiefs of revolution have disposed men to welcome any representative of the royal blood, and in spite of every fault, the

offspring of the rightful family is raised with acclamations to the throne.

But it is not without considerable diffidence, that the following remarks are submitted to the public. In proportion to the greatness of the Poet, is the peril of the Reviewer; so that the criticism which dispraises Mr. Campbell, appears more than usually adventurous. It should soar on eagle pinions, and gaze with eagle eyes: for it rises toward the sun, and looks upon his spots!

The beautiful district of Wyoming, a Pensylvanian colony, peopled from various countries, was suddenly desolated in the year 1778, by an incursion of the Indians. Unfortunately it must be added, that this incursion, marked with singular atrocities, was committed by the allies of Great Britain, against a people whose only crime was their adherence to their own government.

The inhabitants of Wyoming, at the time of the poem's opening, are governed by a kind of patriarch, a venerable Englishman, named Albert. His infant daughter Gertrude, whose mother is no more, forms the comfort and joy of his heart, and grows up beneath his eye, lovely in every personal and mental charm. When she has arrived at the age of nine years, an Indian of a friendly tribe arrives with an English boy, whom he commends to the care of these good colonists. He relates, a little obscurely, but still intelligibly, that the Huron Indians, in sudden infraction of a solemn treaty, had attacked and destroyed a British fort: when the Oneydas, of whom the narrator is a chief, arrived to take vengeance. From a tree they unbound two prisoners, the wife and son of the English captain, who had fallen among his soldiers. The Oneyda women used every effort to restore the strength of the unfortunate lady; but she wasted to death, and bequeathed her child to them, intreating, that they would take him, with a ring in token, to one who would remember, when he beheld "the ring "that Waldegrave's Julia wore." The Indian adds, that in com-

pliance with this request, he has brought the child to Albert. Albert remembering an ancient friendship for this orphan's grandsire and parents, embraces the boy with strong emotion. The composure of the Indian is here very strikingly contrasted with the agitation of Albert. Yet Outalissi also has a heart for feeling: and addresses the sleeping boy in a parting song of great warmth and sensibility. Then he departs: and Albert often afterwards, when a dim sail is seen, climbs the promontory in the tender but vain hope of this kind Indian's return. Here the first part concludes.

The second division opens with a description of scenery, where Gertrude would stray or repose among hillocks of flowers, meditating or reading. Is not this kind of pastime rather unsuitably assigned, in a country where so considerable an annoyance seems likely to be produced by serpents and musquitoes? However, among these scenes arrives a young stranger in a Spanish garb, seeking the abode of Albert. To Albert he is directed by Gertrude. He gives a brief account of his travels, and the damsel begins to feel a palpitation in her bosom. Albert asks him whether he has, by any accident, heard news in Europe of Henry Waldegrave: whom, as no sort of hint has before been communicated of his departure from Wyoming, we now miss for the first time. Of course, this stranger turns out to be himself the beloved Waldegrave. Gertrude recognizes him first: Albert, a little oddly, appearing to have entertained no recollection whatever of his person. In a very concise and rather unceremonious way, the young traveller makes Gertrude a proposal of marriage: and she, though we hear nothing of any previous love, accepts him with unhesitating willingness. The second division concludes with this union.

The third part opens with more descriptions of mountain rambles. The tranquillity of Wyoming is soon disturbed by preparations for war: Gertrude would fain persuade her husband to emigrate for England—but this he resists. Suddenly, at a late hour of the evening, rushes in a being who

presently proves to be our early acquaintance, Outalissi. Age and wounds have almost exhausted him; but after refreshing himself with drink, he begins to recover his strength, and reproaches Albert for not remembering him. This appearance of Outalissi in Wyoming is a little surprising to readers in general, because the first part closes with a couplet which, if not a positive assertion, is yet a very decisive intimation, that he is not to return:

"———— Never more, to bless his longing sight,
"Was Outalissi hail'd, his bark and plumage bright."
Part i. Stanza 28.

Nor is this a species of surprise, that accomplishes any beneficial object. However, when Outalissi declares himself, he is very warmly welcomed: and indeed the welcome is made to detain us an unreasonable time from the business of the visit. At length he announces the approach of the hostile savages, under Brandt, the Mohawk leader; relates the destruction of his own tribe, by that sanguinary chief; and exhorts the family of Albert to rouse their warriors. The enemy approaches. A reinforcement of friends also arrives. The inhabitants of Wyoming repair to their forts. Beneath the walls, in a moment of unsuspecting quiet, an ambushed Indian fires upon the hapless groupe, and Albert falls. Gertrude swoons, and presently the poet exclaims:

"Say, burst they, borrow'd from her father's wound,
"These drops?—Oh, God! the life-blood is her own."

She takes a farewell of Waldegrave, and expires: she is buried with her father: and the poem concludes by Outalissi's condoling address to Waldegrave.

In every species of narrative work, some portion of dramatic talent is indispensable: that is to say, the author should be endowed, not only with a power of telling his story clearly, but with a skill in the delineation of character, and with the faculty of involving his important personages in affecting situations.

In none of these particulars has Mr. Campbell eminently succeeded; not even in clearness of narration. We

hardly find out that Henry has disappeared, till suddenly he re-appears; though this very re-appearance is one of the most important events in the whole work. The breaking out of hostilities, too, is a very material circumstance; and yet it is not without great difficulty that the reader collects, how the war has arisen, or who are the contending parties. The death of Gertrude is a fact of still higher consequence; but the manner of that death is so carelessly left to conjecture, that at this day it is a generally disputed point, whether she be slain by the same volley which destroys her father, or by a subsequent discharge, or in what other way. Nor, at last, is any thing declared concerning the fate of Henry and Outalissi, who have resolved on warlike revenge against the destroyers; but with more than the abruptness of a German drama, the curtain is dropt upon the agitated groupe, and every thing abandoned to the imagination of the public. No doubt, a prosaic, lawyer-like accuracy of narration is an error to be most studiously avoided; but of late, an alarming multitude of authors have affected a negligent grace, and left half their story to be guessed. It is impossible too decidedly to discourage a fashion that abridges the writer's trouble, by increasing that of the reader. Those classes of poetry which come under the head of the Enigma, appear to be the only kinds of composition, where the author has any right to an exclusive property in his own meaning.

The skilful delineation of character is a virtue that may atone for many errors; but Mr. Campbell has no such redemption. Outalissi indeed is pourtrayed with boldness and great effect; but his portrait is not so properly the sketch of an individual's *character*, as the personification of a people's *manners*. It is certainly a most picturesque description of the Indian tribes in general; but, having no peculiarity in its air, no individuality to make it original and distinct, the admiration that it deserves must be paid to it for other merits

than *characteristic* drawing. The rest of the personages are merely amiable and insipid.

Many deficiencies, that could not have been absolutely justified, might at least have been overlooked, if the principal agents had been thrown into impressive situations of dramatic effect. There are three passages, where scenes of this nature appear to have been designed: the first is the recognition of Waldegrave, on his return to Wyoming—the second is the recognition of Outalissi, on his annunciation of the invaders—and the third is the death of Albert and his daughter. The recognitions, and the deaths, of principal characters, have often been successfully employed, in plays and in narratives, to excite curiosity and sympathy; but now, repetition has weakened their effect at best, and Mr. Campbell has not made the most ingenious use even of their remaining capability to please. As to his recognitions, they excite no emotion whatever: and even the pathos of Gertrude's dying words, which seems to have been designed for the main effect of the poem, is almost extinguished by the unskilful contrivance of the circumstances that occasion her destruction. This catastrophe is made simply a matter of accident: not such an accident as is brought about by any dramatic concatenation of causes, but the sort of accident that we daily read of in the newspapers, which happens by mere ill-luck.

If there had been any thing of concertment, or of particular motive in the heroine's destruction—if, for instance, she had been represented as having rejected some lover, who should have unintentionally slain her in aiming at his rival Henry:—in short, if any contrivance had prepared the way, and enabled the reader to perceive, on looking back, that the event was at all in the natural course of things, the poem might have left some impression on the heart. But little interest can arise from the main events, when they are so loosely appended to the extremity of the plot, that whether or not they had happened, the story would still have been equally

coherent. A great part of the pleasure communicated by an artfully-contrived catastrophe, arises from the gratification of a long suspense. But a mere sudden accident has produced no suspense; no one has said to himself, How will the embarrassment end? for there has been no embarrassment to a single personage of the drama—the difficulties do not begin, till the occurrence of the very casualty that ends them.

Accidents, therefore—though quite allowable in the complication of an interest—are never to be admired in its developement, unless they fairly arise out of previous occurrences, and then they are more properly called incidents than accidents. They then partake of motive in the agent, or of concertment in the poet, as well as of pure external chance. Those few symmetrical narratives which have continued, and will continue to flourish amid the successive decay of their clumsy competitors, afford complete illustrations of this principle. One example will suffice, which is preferred, because it springs from a countryman of Mr. Campbell. It is in the Douglas of Mr. Home. Douglas dies by one of those accidents that are properly termed incidents; an accident arising from the previous occurrences of the play. The unfortunate misconception of his patron, the innocent tenderness of his mother, and the natural and progressive hatred of his enemy, all create anxiety and suspense in the spectator, and all prepare the way for this melancholy event. The very causes that excite our affection for his character, lead at last to the blow that destroys him.—Physicians have declared, that men are born with the seeds of their mortal diseases: and thus should the previous events of a narrative contain the principle of its catastrophe.

Even though the final situation of this poem had been constructed as ably as it is unskilfully, there would still be reason to regret the want of little previous circumstances, calculated to enliven the tale. Such circumstances, though not directly, yet very powerfully, contribute to the effect of any

great situation, by the interest that they diffuse over the characters concerned. There must be as little need to dwell upon the importance of diffusing a strong interest over the principal agents of a great situation, as to enlarge on the various influences by which previous incident may invest those agents with such an interest: it must be quite sufficient to remind an author of the general fact, that his agents will recommend themselves infinitely more by what they themselves do, than by any thing that his warmest zeal can say for them.

Let it be observed, that the dramatic skill of which the necessity has been thus inculcated, must by no means be confounded with a theatrical manner: for dramatic effect is then only to be admired, when it is perfectly consistent with the simplest and purest nature.

It has been attempted to set up an apology, for this poem's deficience in the great requisites here recommended: and, strange to say, the tone, in which some defenders of Gertrude have hitherto proceeded, has been—not excuse, but triumph. They declare that, though this very quiet kind of poem be not calculated to strike the most strongly, yet it is likely to please the most deeply, and to be the longest admired. But a poem is not like a philosophical work, which, at its first appearance, may be misunderstood by ignorance, and abused by bigotry, and distorted by prejudice, and so completely overwhelmed with all sorts of rubbish, that the clearing hand of that great improver, time, is indispensable to the placing of its merits in a fair point of view: a poem, in these days, when once it has become known, has no obstacles to overcome: if it can ever please at all, it may reasonably be expected to please on the first reading; if it fails then, it is not very likely to obtain any second chance of pleasing. A fine poem indeed will, for a very long time, continue to display new beauties on each new examination; but no poem can be called fine, which does not display beauties enow at the first perusal to induce a second.

Some have said that Gertrude does display beauties enow to induce a second perusal, if the reader have but sufficient sensibility to enjoy pathetic charms, and sufficient patience to search for merits that are not self-evident. It is perfectly undeniable, that no pathetic poem can succeed with an insensible reader; but as to the patience that can justly be expected, there will probably be a considerable difference of opinion. May it not even be truly affirmed, that patience is a favour which no poet has the smallest right to calculate upon? The reader, to be sure, must lend himself readily: he should always be accessible when merit comes to call upon him; but he is not bound to exercise his patience by travelling to look after merit.

It is true that, in general, where poetical beauties are highly enjoyed, there is some exercise performed by the intellects of the reader. The mode of that exercise appears to have been much misrepresented in a late defence, no less sophistical than ingenious, of Mr. Campbell's poem: and as the arguments on this subject must determine the value, not only of Gertrude, but of numberless analogous works, it may not be improper to say a few words on the nature of the enjoyment which Poetry affords.

In the defence alluded to, it is stated that "the highest delight which Poetry produces, does not arise from the mere passive perception of the images or sentiments which it presents to the mind, but from *the excitement which is given to its own eternal activity*, and the character which is impressed on the train of its spontaneous conceptions." It is added, that "the object is, to awaken in our minds a train of kindred emotions, and to *excite our imaginations to work out for themselves* a tissue of pleasing conceptions."—From which reasonings it is presently inferred, that such a poem as Gertrude is preferable to a work which agitates the reader with a more direct and potent operation.

That the sum of our pleasure is completed, not merely from

what is actually presented on the page of the poet, but also, in a considerable measure, from the "spontaneous conceptions of the reader's mind," from the awakened "train of kindred emotions," is a truth which can hardly be disputed. But "*the excitement which is given to the mind's eternal activity*," is quite another question, and demands no such readiness of agreement. When the reader's "*imagination works out for itself* that tissue of pleasing conceptions," which, in some way or other, undoubtedly ought to exist, then the reader, and not the author, is the poet. Certainly, if once we admit the principles here quoted, we shall be absolutely compelled to allow that Gertrude affords "the highest delight which poetry produces:" for not only have most of the beauties which its advocates applaud, been entirely *worked out by their own imaginations*, but the unusual obscurity, both of the narrative and of the expression, gives a constant *excitement to the mind's eternal activity*.

Perhaps the question is more fairly stated thus:—It may be highly meritorious in the poet to inspire his readers with a fullness and variety of sensation, which are not precisely induced by the actual words of the poem,—whether that object be effected by awakening associations, or by any other of those pleasing resources, which the art of poetry affords; but it is no merit at all to produce a series of lines which require the trouble of profound consideration, and force us upon analysing, when we ought only to feel. The *conceptions*, in short, must be always involuntary.

But, in reality, the arguments on this question, from first to last, apply not to the *narrative*, but to the *poetry:* and though they be allowed to supply a justification of *poetical passages* that are lightly sketched, furnish no reason why a weak and ordinary *plot* should be preferred to a fable composed of bold, interesting, and affecting situations. Descriptions, and declamations, and even feelings, may be greatly

aided by the *imagination* of the reader; but incidents and situations are brought before him as fact, and fact is a subject for *perception*, not for *imagination*. Therefore incidents and situatio s should be represented in a point of view, where they may *strike upon the perception* with *perfect distinctness and forcible impression.*

We must not forget to consider the general tenderness for which this poem has been so highly praised. It does indeed possess much of that pleasing quality, and there would have been little occasion for complaint, if Mr. Campbell had consolidated his tenderness into pathetic situations, instead of allowing it to trickle in descriptions and speeches. How much he might have done, the reader will easily judge, from the following beautiful lines, where Waldegrave, agonized by the loss of Gertrude and Albert, receives the condolence of the kind Indian:

" Then mournfully the parting bugle bid
" Its farewell o'er the grave of worth and truth;
" Prone to the dust, afflicted Waldegrave hid
" His face on earth;—him watch'd in gloomy ruth,
" His woodland guide; but words had none to sooth
" The grief that knew not consolation's name:
" Casting his Indian mantle o'er the youth,
" He watch'd, beneath its folds, each burst that came,
" Convulsive, ague-like, across his shuddering frame!

" ' And I could weep;'— th' Oneyda chief
" His descant wildly thus began:
" ' But that I may not stain with grief
" ' The death-song of my father's son!
" ' Or bow this head in woe:
" ' For by my wrongs, and by my wrath!
" ' To-morrow Areourki's breath
" ' (That fires yon heav'n with storms of death)
" ' Shall light us to the foe:
" ' And we shall share, my Christian boy!
" ' The foe-man's blood, the avenger's joy.

" ' But thee, my flow'r, whose breath was giv'n
" ' By milder genii o'er the deep,
" ' The spirits of the white man's heav'n

" ' Forbid not thee to weep :—
" ' Nor will the Christian host,
" ' Nor will thy father's spirit grieve
" ' To see thee, on the battle's eve,
" ' Lamenting take a mournful leave
" ' Of her who lov'd thee most :
" ' She was the rainbow to thy sight!
" ' Thy sun—thy heav'n—of lost delight!

" ' To-morrow let us do or die!
" ' But when the bolt of death is hurl'd,
" ' Ah! whither then with thee to fly,
" ' Shall Outalissi roam the world?
" ' Seek we thy once-lov'd home?
" ' The hand is gone that cropt its flow'rs!
" ' Unheard the clock repeats its hours!
" ' Cold is the hearth within their bow'rs!
" ' And should we thither roam,
" ' Its echoes, and its empty tread
" ' Would sound like voices from the dead!

" ' Or shall we cross yon mountains blue,
" ' Whose streams my kindred nation quaff'd:
" ' And by my side, in battle true,
" ' A thousand warriors drew the shaft?
" ' Ah! there in desolation cold,
" ' The desert serpent dwells alone,
" ' Where grass o'ergrows each mould'ring bone,
" ' And stones themselves to ruin grown,
" ' Like me, are death-like old.
" ' Then seek we not their camp—for there—
" ' The silence dwells of my despair!

" ' But, hark, the trump! to-morrow thou
" ' In glory's fires shalt dry thy tears :
" ' Ev'n from the land of shadows now
" ' My father's awful ghost appears :
" ' Amidst the clouds that round us roll
" ' He bids my soul for battle thirst ;
" ' He bids me dry the last—the first---
" ' The only tears that ever burst,
" ' From Outalissi's soul ;—
" ' Because I may not stain with grief
" ' The death-song of an Indian chief.' "

Part III. stanzas 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39. p. 69, 70, 71, 72, and 73.

There is something sweetly affectionate in the conclusion of that adieu which the Indian pronounces, when he is about to return to his own deserts, leaving Waldegrave, yet a child, in Albert's care:

> " While I in lonely wilderness shall meet
> " Thy little foot-prints—or by traces know
> " The fountain, where at noon I thought it sweet
> " To feed thee with the quarry of my bow,
> " And pour'd the lotus-horn, or slew the mountain-roe.
> Part I. stanza 25. p. 22.

But with respect to Gertrude's dying speech, of which the tenderness has by some been extolled, as alone sufficient to establish a reputation for the whole poem, there seems by no means an excuse for indulging in so free a panegyric. As to the single merit of tender feeling, this speech is not inferior to either of the passages quoted before; but it is totally void of that sweet diction by which they are distinguished. The emotions succeed each other very naturally: but they are connected by a most unnatural phraseology. Not that the individual words, except in one or two places, are otherwise than simple and appropriate; but the inversion and transposition with which they are arranged, cruelly cripple the style, and perpetually break the reader's emotion. One may easily peruse the whole speech once or twice, without discovering that it has any merit at all: so little does the language assist the effect of the sentiment. Every critic, after examining with careful consideration, what would be the feelings of a woman in Gertrude's condition, will probably declare that they would be exactly those which agitate Gertrude; but it requires none of this careful consideration, to declare that no one would convey Gertrude's feelings in Gertrude's present language. And when the language is obviously unlike the language of Nature, people very seldom give themselves the trouble of searching whether there be any natural feelings beneath so uncouth an expression:

" ' Weep not, O Love,' she cries, ' to see me bleed—
" ' Thee, Gertrude's sad survivor, thee alone—
" ' Heaven's peace commiserate ; for scarce I heed
" ' These wounds ;—yet thee to leave is death, is death indeed.'"

What dying mourner would speak with this worse than Cowleian contortion? Can any thing be more stiff and cramp than Gertrude's designation of herself in the third person?—or than the awkward benediction, " Heaven's peace commiserate thee?"—

" Clasp me a little longer, on the brink
" Of fate, while I can feel thy drear caress,---

is exquisite: here is no transposition nor clumsiness, no kind of affectation—but in an instant " the genial current of the soul" is checked by that foe to feeling, a parenthesis :

" And, when this heart hath ceas'd to beat—oh ! think,
" (And let it mitigate thy woe's excess)
" That thou hast been to me all tenderness,
" And friend to more than human friendship just."

The three lines that follow these, have very little warmth :

" Oh ! by that *retrospect* of happiness,
" And by the hopes of an immortal trust,
" God shall assuage thy pangs—when I am laid in dust !"

Such words as *retrospect* belong rather to philosophy than to feeling: and the formal and metaphysically distinct enunciation of the two methods by which heaven may tranquillize the mind, namely, the recollection of the past, and the expectation of the future, has something rather more cool and considerate, than agonized feeling seems to allow. However this may be thought too nice an objection—let us go on to the succeeding lines :

" Go, Henry, go not back, when I depart,
" The scene thy bursting tears too deep will move,
" Where my dear father took thee to his heart,
" And Gertrude thought it ecstasy to rove

" With thee, as with an angel, through the grove
" Of peace—imagining her lot was cast
" In heav'n ; for ours was not like earthly love.

In this there is much to displease: we find the speaker again recurring to that unnatural device, the employment of the third person:—the stiff exclamation, " Go, Henry, go not back," excites fresh distaste:—and, however the thought may deserve praise, nothing can be much less simple or easy than the line, " The scene thy bursting tears too deep will move." " Ours was not like earthly love," is admirable. The next couplet is not very striking; but at least it has not been spoilt by transposition.

" And must this parting be our very last ?
" No ! I shall love thee still, when death itself is past."

The next stanza begins with another of those cramp sentences, which, as often as they occur, strike a chill through the kindling heart of the reader, break the coherence of the sensation as it rises, and leave the whole excitation of sympathy to be recommenced as at first:

" Half could I bear, methinks, to leave this earth,---
" And thee, more lov'd, than aught beneath the sun,
" If I had liv'd to smile but on the birth
" Of one dear pledge ;---but shall there then be none,
" In future times---no gentle little one,
" To clasp thy neck, and look, resembling me !

The regret, that she perishes childless, is sweetly imagined; but it is spoilt by being placed as a question. The words, even in this shape, might have been very allowable, if they had sprung suddenly forth as a burst of feeling—if they had been made the beginning of the stanza;—" And shall there then," &c.—but here they are temperately employed at the conclusion of a sentence. Therefore, as the interrogation insinuates no kind of doubt, it can be nothing but a figure of speech: and this figure, however useful in argument or exhortation, can hardly produce an effect in feeling unless it shoot involuntarily and

suddenly. Few verses have ever been written, less natural or agreeable, than the two former of the three following lines:

> " Yet seems it, e'en while life's last pulses run,
> " A sweetness in the cup of death to be,
> " Lord of my bosom's love! to die beholding thee!"
>
> Part III. Stanzas 28, 29, 30, 31. p. 65, 66, 67.

And with these the speech concludes.

Perhaps it will be thought by those who wish to be poets at a small expence, that these little awkwardnesses and inversions are of no importance, so the feeling be but natural. It must be owned that awkwardness and inversion have precedent in their favour; but reason can never be with them: for it is obvious that, in order to make the representation of nature complete in every respect, the expression should be natural as well as the idea: and who will maintain that inversion is natural? Which of us, in expressing an ardent feeling, expresses it by transposing his words, and involving his sentences? Poetry, indeed, is privileged to step a little way beyond ordinary nature, when the licence can add fascination, or grandeur, or grace, or in any way heighten the general effect: but is any one of these desireable ends attained by the departures from nature, which are called inversions?—Certainly not. Then assuredly inversions are quite inexcusable. Versification is the medium through which poetry is perceived: and if the medium be ruffled and turbid, every object will come distorted to the perception.

In all works of art, though the design is the most material consideration, yet a natural and skilful expression is indispensably requisite to success: and the reason why so few of the numerous candidates for fame arrive at any very great eminence, is that so few possess a union of the creative and executive faculties.

Mr. Campbell, in some passages of his work, has inverted so unmercifully, as to become almost unintelligible; and though the fault does not every where amount to inextricable

perplexity, yet the versification is so unceasingly pinched and fettered, that the diction of the whole poem assumes a character at once hard and flat, clumsy and weak. In short, the phraseology is as obscure and ungraceful as the narrative. The reader will be able to form a tolerably fair notion of these defects, by a few passages which we have selected from a numerous series.

Albert is described as a widower with his infant daughter.

> " A lov'd bequest and I may half impart—
> " To them that feel the strong paternal tie,
> " How like a new existence to his heart
> " Uprose that living flow'r beneath his eye,
> " Dear as she was, from cherub infancy,
> " From hours when she would round his garden play,
> " To time when as the rip'ning years went by,
> " Her lovely mind would culture well repay,
> " And more engaging grew from pleasing day to day."
>
> Part I. Stanza 11. p. 12.

Albert apostrophizes the deceased mother of Waldegrave:

> " And Julia! when thou wert like Gertrude now,
> " Can I forget thee, favourite child of yore?
> " Or thought I, in thy father's house when thou
> " Wert lightest-hearted on his festive floor,
> " And first of all his hospitable door,
> " To meet and kiss me at my journey's end?
> " But where was I, when Waldegrave was no more?
> " And thou didst, pale, thy gentle head extend,
> " In woes, that e'en the tribe of desarts was thy friend!"
>
> Part I. Stanza 22. p. 19, & 20.

The scenery of Wyoming is delineated:

> " But high, in amphitheatre above,
> " His arms the everlasting aloes threw;
> " Breath'd but an air of heav'n, and all the grove
> " As if with instinct living spirit grew,
> " Rolling its verdant gulphs of every hue."
>
> Part II. Stanza 10. p. 33.

The poet blesses his happy groupe:

> " Roll on, ye days of raptur'd influence, shine!
> " Nor blind with ecstasy's celestial fire,
> " Shall love behold the spark of earth-born time expire."
>
> Part III. Stanza 1. p. 47.

Waldegrave, whom Gertrude has been urging to emigration, expresses his resolution of remaining in America to face the foe:

"But shame—but flight--a recreant's name to prove,
"To hide in exile ignominious fears;
"Say, e'en if this I brook'd, the public love
"Thy father's bosom to his home endears:
"And how could I his few remaining years
"My Gertrude sever from so dear a child?

Part III. Stanza 9. p. 52, & 53.

The obscurity of these and other lines may be somewhat increased by the punctuation, which is every where exceedingly slovenly; but the author, on the whole, seems more blameable even than the printer. It has been imagined, that too much labour has spoilt his poem: this excuse it is difficult to believe. Inversion and involution cost no labour; labour is not their parent, but their destroyer.

The real causes of Mr. Campbell's failure appear to have been these two: first, that the narrative on which he employed himself, was incapable of producing much effect: and secondly, that if any little merit did spring up, it was choaked by the unmanageable nature of the metre. The toil of finding treble and quadruple lines of rhyme, is infinite; and when the difficulty has been overcome, the rhymes recur too distantly and unequally, to fall with a pleasing regularity on the reader's ear. So that the author has almost all the disadvantages of blank-verse without any of its conveniences. The constant intervention of the Alexandrines too, though Mr. Campbell, in several stanzas, has turned them to a good account, is, on the whole, exceedingly unfavourable. For the English reader, from long habit, is apt, whenever an Alexandrine appears, to expect something like a vigorous thought, or the winding up of a climax: something, in short, that is to make a kind of point in the author's favour. But as it is impossible to create points at the end of all the stanzas, and as, nevertheless, the Alexandrine must always recur, it very often recurs flatly, and, instead of aiding, clogs

the author. This is indeed that needless Alexandrine, deprecated by Pope.—Such a stanza would have been fatal to almost any writer: and Mr. Campbell's selection of it was more especially injudicious, because, in other kinds of harmony, he is known to possess powers of versification, which have not been surpassed by any poet in our language. But in his present injurious metre, he travels, cramped and embarrassed, from sentence to sentence, like Fortunio's magic racer in the fairy tale, who, possessing a swiftness that could out-strip the winds, delighted to run with his feet in bonds.

Let us now proceed to the more agreeable contemplation of the beauties that Gertrude contains. They are not numerous: and it will take no very great space to insert them all. They shall succeed each other as they stand in the original. Scotland is thus apostrophized—rather ungrammatically, but very poetically:

> "But who is he that yet a dearer land
> "Remembers, over hills and far away?
> "Green Albyn! what though he no more survey
> "Thy ships at anchor on the quiet shore,
> "Thy pellochs rolling from the mountain bay;
> "Thy lone sepulchral cairn upon the moor,
> "And distant isles that hear the loud Corbrechtan roar!*"
>
> Part I. Stanza 5. p. 8.

The Indian's farewell to the child has already been extracted: so that the next passage which deserves remark, is the description of the river:

> "There was the river heard, in bed of wrath,
> "(A precipice of foam from mountains brown,)
> "Like tumults heard from some far distant town;
> "But soft'ning in approach he left his gloom
> "And murmur'd pleasantly, and laid him down—
> "To kiss those easy curving banks of bloom,
> "That lent the windward air an exquisite perfume...."
>
> Part II. Stanza 3. p. 28 & 29.

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* The great Whirlpool of the Western Hebrides.

The foregoing lines breathe an air of Shakspeare, and a good deal resemble Julia's speech in the Two Gentlemen of Verona:

> "The current that with gentle murmur glides,
> Thou know'st, being stopped, impatiently doth rage;
> But when his fair course is not hindered,
> He makes sweet music with th' enamel'd stones,
> Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
> He overtaketh in his pilgrimage:
> And so, by many winding nooks, he strays
> With willing sport to the wild ocean." Act II.

Waldegrave's account of his travels contains a stanza, which would be admirable if it had any relation to the business of the Poem:

> "Anon some wilder portraiture he draws:
> "Of Nature's savage glories he would speak—
> "The loneliness of earth that overawes:
> "Where, resting by some tomb of old Cacique,
> "The lama-driver on Peruvia's peak,
> "Nor voice nor living motion marks around;
> "But storks that to the boundless forest shriek;
> "Or wild-cane arch high flung o'er gulph profound,
> "That fluctuates when the storms of El Dorado sound.
>
> Part II. Stanza 16. p. 37.

Something of Mr. Campbell's genuine spirit appears in the following lamentation:

> "Sad was the year, by proud oppression driv'n
> "When Transatlantic liberty arose,
> "Not in the sunshine, and the smile of heav'n,
> "But wrapt in whirlwinds, and begirt with woes:—
> "Amidst the strife of fratricidal foes,
> "Her birth-star was the light of burning plains;
> "Her baptism is the weight of blood that flows
> "From kindred hearts---the blood of British veins—
> "And famine tracks her steps, and pestilential pains."
>
> Part III. Stanza 6. p. 50, & 51.

The Oneyda chief, exhausted, is thus forcibly described:

> "To speak he tries, but quivering, pale, and parch'd
> "From lips, as by some pow'rless dream accurs'd,
> "Emotions unintelligible burst;
> "And long his filmed eye is red and dim;

"At lengh the pity-proffer'd cup his thirst
"Had half assuag'd, and nerv'd his shuddering limb,
"When Albert's hand he grasp'd!—but Albert knew not him." Part III. Stanza 11. p. 54.

The Indian's death-song has already been extracted.

There are single lines scattered up and down, which have some merit. One of the most remarkable is:

"Red is the cup they drink; but not with wine:"

which, however, seems to have been borrowed from Dr. Leyden.

The following verse,

"Led by his dusky guide, like morning led by night,"

recalls a passage in Dr. Young's Revenge, where Leonora, conducted by her aged father, is compared to Truth led by hoary Time. There is yet a third, extremely striking—it is the characteristic description of Outalissi,

"A Stoic of the woods—a man without a tear."

The examination of this poem has been an irksome and a painful task: and nothing could have compensated its invidiousness, except the opportunity that it affords, of collaterally contemplating Mr. Campbell's genius in other more advantageous aspects. A Reviewer, of whatever courage, will probably feel himself disagreeably situated, when he is compelled to blame such authors, because, on these occasions, he is particularly obnoxious to the charge of presumption: and that charge, being of all others the most generally applicable to his tribe, is, very naturally, the most painful. It is indeed but too true, that the Critic, like all petty magistrates, is, for the most part, by vanity and petulance, and the other bad passions that pervert authority in little minds, most powerfully tempted to plume himself on his own diminutive dignity, and insult the genuine greatness of merit. The lion is defenceless, and every passing ass will indulge in a kick. But most certainly the foregoing pages, however

ungracious they may have appeared, have not originated from any such eagerness to seize an opportunity of being impertinent. There is no mind of common modesty but must pause, and no heart of common candour but must lament, when the deed of so fine a Poet is to be pronounced unworthy. A thousand prepossessions rush to his rescue, and the judge, like Felix, trembles in the presence of the accused. But when at last the process is concluded—when every defence has been fairly considered, and no alternative remains but a total condemnation—then the sentence must be unshrinkingly declared: and it is reasonable to hope, that the necessary harshness of the judgment will not be considered as the insolence of the judge.

Lochiel's warning is reprinted in this volume: a glowing effusion, admirable for the vigour and pathos of its poetry, and splendid in the sonorous harmony of its language. It is a dialogue between Lochiel, a Highland chief, and a seer who ineffectually strives to dissuade him, from engaging in the cause of Prince Charles, the Pretender. The following burst of the prophet is indeed a strain of inspiration:

"Ha, laugh'st thou, Lochiel, my vision to scorn?
"Proud bird of the mountain, thy plume shall be torn!—
"Say, rush'd the bold eagle exultingly forth,
"From his home, in the dark-rolling clouds of the north,
"Lo! the death-shot of foemen outspeeding, he rode,
"Companionless bearing destruction abroad;
"But down let him stoop from his havoc on high!
"Ah! home let him speed;—for the spoiler is nigh.
"Why flames the far summit? Why shoot to the blast,
"Those embers like stars from the firmament cast?
"'Tis the fire-show'r of ruin all fearfully driv'n
"From his eyrie, that beacons the darkness of heav'n.—
"Oh! chieftain, whose tow'r on the mountain shall burn!
"Return to thy dwelling, all lonely return!
"For the blackness of ashes shall mark where it stood,
"And a wild mother scream o'er her famishing brood."

P. 119, 120.

Again, in anticipation of Prince Charles's defeat and final escape by sea:

" 'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
" And coming events cast their shadows before.
" I tell thee, Culloden's dread echoes shall ring,
" With the blood-hounds that bark for thy fugitive king:
" Anointed by heav'n with the vials of wrath,
" Behold! where he flies on his desolate path.
" Now, in darkness and billows, he sweeps from my sight:
" Arise ye wild tempests and cover his flight!

The ballads of Glenara and Lord Ullin's daughter are very indifferent. The song called the Battle of the Baltic has striking beauties; but at the end of each stanza, there is a line so short as to be almost ludicrous, a line of only three syllables; such as: " Led them on—For a time—Of the Sun"—and so forth. The " Mariners of England" is one continued blaze of excellence, and the " Battle of Hohenlinden" is probably superior to every thing of its kind. It is matter of great regret, that the copious extracts already presented, and those which are yet to be inserted from Mr. Campbell's principal work, the Pleasures of Hope, make it impossible to indulge the reader with these three smaller poems.

The Pleasures of Hope may be dispraised for some instances of carelessness and inaccuracy, and still more severely censured for the material fault of a loose and digressive arrangement: but when we turn from such demerits to examine the poetry of that exquisite work—when we consider the sweetness and tenderness of its pathos, the brilliance of its imagery, the gentle truth of its philosophy, the condensed harmony and eloquent vigour of its versification, the spirit and naturalness of its descriptions, and above all, its magnificent examples of true sublimity—the cold consideration of its errors melts away beneath the radiance of its beauties, and duty and candour demand that it be ranked among the noblest productions of poetical genius. Shall any one protest against this mode of forming an estimate, and insist that we ought to judge a poet's genius,—not by a series of passages, but by the merits which a poem possesses as a whole?—With equal force would this argument affect the fame of Shakspeare him-

self: for Shakspeare, splendid as he was in his poetry, was totally inconsiderable in the construction of his poems, although construction was of infinitely greater importance in such works as his, than in a didactic poem like the Pleasures of Hope. There is a principle more just as well as more generous—that principle of candour, which bids the critic pronounce, that though deficiency of plan, and slovenliness of connexion, are by no means excusable, where the poetical merit is but moderate; yet, where the excellences are so transcendent, as to carry the reader from page to page, forgetful of every defect in the arrangement, and occupied only with the glories of the poetry, the errors are ampl atoned by the balance of the beauties, and the author deserves to be extolled, without coldness, equivocation, or distrust!

Let those critics then who feel the merits of Mr. Campbell, come candidly forward to do their duty, unawed by the ridicule that vulgarity and prejudice may be expected to raise: let those critics venture, notwithstanding the æra of his birth, to praise him as one of the pre-eminent poets, whose faults are neutralized, and ought to be forgotten, in the paramount force of their merits. Those inconsiderable specks which mingle, perhaps inseparably, with the brightest productions of genius, may always be discerned when Envy casts her shade; but let it be remembered, that some such baleful obscurity is absolutely essential to the detection: for it is only when the observatory is darkened, that the dusty atoms can be discerned in the sun-beam.

Without considering, therefore, the general arrangement of the lines, which indeed are rather sewed together than interwoven, let us proceed to mark a few passages, which may illustrate the genius of the author. From these the candid reader is intreated to form his opinion of Mr. Campbell's merit. The individual deficiency of his last work is not to be urged in depreciation of his general talents—for one failure is no decisive evidence of a poet's weakness;

but a series of splendid beauties is an irrefragable proof of his power.

Hope is invoked to bless the wedded pair of love and virtue, bowed by the pressure of misfortunes.

" There, as the parent deals his scanty store
" To friendless babes, and weeps to give no more,
" Tell, that his manly race shall yet assuage
" Their father's wrongs, and shield his latter age.
" What though for him no Hybla sweets distil,
" Nor bloomy vines wave purple on the hill;
" Tell, that when silent years have pass'd away,
" That when his eyes grow dim, his tresses grey,
" These busy hands a lovelier cot shall build,
" And deck with fairer flowers his little field,
" And call from heav'n propitious dews to breathe
" Arcadian beauty on the barren heath."

The mother contemplating her sleeping child, is supposed to be thus addressing him:

" ' Sleep, image of my father, sleep, my boy:
" ' No ling'ring hour of sorrow shall be thine;
" ' No sigh that rends thy father's heart and mine;
" ' Bright as his manly sire, the son shall be
" ' In form and soul; but, ah! more blest than he!
" ' Thy fame, thy worth, thy filial love, at last,
" ' Shall soothe this aching heart for all the past—
" ' With many a smile my solitude repay,
" ' And chase the world's ungenerous scorn away.
" ' And say, when summon'd from the world and thee,
" ' I lay my head beneath the willow tree,
" ' Wilt thou, sweet mourner! at my stone appear,
" ' And soothe my parted spirit ling'ring near?
" ' Oh, wilt thou come, at ev'ning hour, to shed
" ' The tears of Memory o'er my narrow bed;
" ' With aching temples on thy hand reclin'd,
" ' Muse on the last farewell I leave behind,
" ' Breathe a deep sigh to winds that murmur low,
" ' And think on all my love, and all my woe?' "

She is then described in another interesting point of view:

" Soon as the playful innocent can prove
" A tear of pity, or a smile of love,

" Or cons his murm'ring task beneath her care,
" Or lisps with holy look his ev'ning prayer,
" Or gazing, mutely pensive, sits to hear
" The mournful ballad warbled in his ear ;
" How fondly looks admiring Hope the while,
" At every artless tear, and every smile !

The maniac is pictured, wildly expecting the return of a lover, by whose death her reason has been snatch'd from her :

" Oft when yon moon has climb'd the midnight sky,
" And the lone sea-bird wakes its wildest cry,
" Pil'd on the steep, her blazing faggots burn,
" To hail the bark that never can return ;
" And still she waits, but scarce forbears to weep,
" That constant love can linger on the deep."

Surely nothing can be more pathetic than the sensation of this poor girl, lamenting that her lover lingers, and yet even in her deepest grief, prevented, by that very madness which his death has caused, from suspecting that he will return to her no more !

The African chief in slavery is depicted with infinite force of feeling :

" Faint, bleeding, bound, he weeps the night away ;
" And, when the sea-wind wafts the dewless day,
" Starts, with a bursting heart, for evermore
" To curse the sun that lights their guilty shore !"

The following lines explain themselves :

" In joyous youth, what soul hath never known
" Thought, feeling, taste, harmonious to its own ?
" Who hath not paus'd while Beauty's pensive eye
" Ask'd from his heart the homage of a sigh ?
" Who hath not own'd, with rapture-smitten frame,
" The power of grace, the magic of a name ?
" There be, perhaps, who barren hearts avow," &c.
* * * * *
" But triumph not, ye peace-enamour'd few,
" Fire, Nature, Genius, never dwelt with you !
" For you no fancy consecrates the scene
" Where rapture utter'd vows, and wept between !"
* * * * *

"No; the wild bliss of Nature needs alloy,
"And fear and sorrow fan the fire of joy!"

An evening walk is thus poetically conceived:

"The moon is up—the watch-tow'r dimly burns—
"And down the vale his sober step returns;
"But pauses oft, as winding rocks convey
"The still, sweet, fall of music far away;
"And oft he lingers from his home a while,
"To watch the dying notes!—and start, and smile!"

These extracts have probably conveyed some idea of Mr. Campbell's powers for the poetry of pathos and feeling. The brilliance and variety of his imagination will perhaps appear, from this sketch of a poet contemplating nature:

"There shall he love, when genial morn appears,
"Like pensive beauty smiling in her tears,
"To watch the bright'ning roses of the sky,
"And muse on nature with a poet's eye!—
"And when the sun's last splendour lights the deep,
"The woods, and waves, and murm'ring winds asleep;
"When fairy harps th' Hesperian planet hail,
"And the lone cuckoo sighs along the vale,
"His path shall be," &c.

There is not less splendour in the apostrophe to Hope:

"Angel of life; thy glittering wings explore
"Earth's loneliest bounds, and ocean's wildest shore.
"Lo; to the wint'ry winds the pilot yields
"His bark, careering o'er unfathom'd fields;
"Now on Atlantic waves he rides afar,
"Where Andes, giant of the western star,
"With meteor-standard to the winds unfurl'd,
"Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world.
"Now far he sweeps, where scarce a summer smiles,
"On Behring's rocks, or Greenland's naked isles;
"Cold on his midnight watch the breezes blow,
"From wastes that slumber in eternal snow;
"And waft, across the wave's tumultuous roar,
"The wolf's long howl from Oonalaska's shore.

Mr. Campbell is admirable in the description of external nature also; his descriptions have generally the benefit of association with a sentiment:

" And, mark the wretch, whose wanderings never knew
" The world's regard, that soothes, though half untrue,
" Whose erring heart the lash of sorrow bore,
" But found not pity when it err'd no more. ——

" Ev'n he, at evening, should he chance to stray,
" Down by the hamlet's hawthorn-scented way,
" Where, round the cot's romantic glade are seen
" The blossom'd beanfield, and the sloping green,
" Leans o'er its humble gate, and thinks the while
" Oh! that for me some home like this would smile,
" Some hamlet shade, to yield my sickly form,
" Health in the breeze, and shelter in the storm!

Again:

" Let winter come! let polar spirits sweep
" The dark'ning world, and tempest-troubled deep!
" Though boundless snows the wither'd heath deform,
" And the dim sun scarce wanders through the storm;
" Yet shall the smile of social love repay,
" With mental light, the melancholy day!
" And, when its short and sullen noon is o'er,
" The ice-chain'd waters slumbering on the shore,
" How bright the faggots in his little hall
" Blaze on the hearth, and warm the pictur'd wall!

The next merit that shall be instanced, is the fascination with which Mr. Campbell has clothed the philosophy of his poem. In expatiating on the comparative blessings of Wisdom and Hope, he exclaims:

" Can Wisdom lend, with all her heav'nly power,
" The pledge of joy's anticipated hour?
" Ah, no! she darkly sees the fate of man—
" Her dim horizon bounded to a span;
" Or if she hold an image to the view,
" 'Tis Nature pictur'd too severely true."

This last couplet is beyond praise.

Of the accidental gales that may ruffle the serenity of connubial love, he thus delightfully expresses himself:

" Though thy wild heart some hapless hour may miss
" The peaceful tenor of unvaried bliss,
" (For love pursues an ever devious race,

" True to the winding lineaments of grace);
" Yet still may Hope her talisman employ
" To snatch from Heaven anticipated joy,
" And all her kindred energies impart
" That burn the brightest in the purest heart!

Nor is it possible to speak with too much admiration of the passage, in which he explains the tender meditations of age on the recollected feelings of youth:

" But yet methinks, when wisdom shall assuage
" The grief and passions of our greener age;

" —o'er her lovely hopes, that once were dear
" The time-taught spirit, pensive, not severe,
" With milder griefs her aged eye shall fill,
" And weep their falsehood, though she love them still!"

Of spirit and vigour the examples are so numerous, that selection is a task of considerable difficulty: thus:

" Friend of the brave! in peril's darkest hour
" Intrepid virtue looks to thee for power;
" To thee the heart its trembling homage yields,
" On stormy floods, and carnage-cover'd fields,
" When front to front the banner'd hosts combine,
" Halt ere they close, and form the dreadful line.
" When all is still on Death's devoted soil,
" The march-worn soldier mingles for the toil;
" As rings his glittering tube, he lifts on high
" The dauntless brow, and spirit-speaking eye,
" Hails in his heart the triumph yet to come,
" And hears thy stormy music in the drum!"

Thus also, in the address of Hope to Genius:

" Yes; to thy tongue shall seraph words be giv'n,
" And pow'r on earth to plead the cause of heav'n!"

The most harmonious versifiers of our language, the Popes and the Darwins, have not been the finest masters of poetical style. Their sentences have been singly beautiful, but not often extremely gratifying in a long succession; for the construction of the paragraphs has been usually so monotonous, as to fatigue instead of pleasing by the melody. Mr.

Campbell has introduced something of that variety in the pauses, of that eloquent climax, and of that progressively accelerated march, of which Dryden appears to have originally furnished a grand but imperfect idea, and which succeeding poets, either overlooking its value, or alarmed by its difficulty, have almost universally concurred to neglect.

> " Ye fond adorers of departed fame,
> " Who warm at Scipio's worth, or Tully's name:
> " Ye that, in fancied vision, can admire
> " The sword of Brutus, and the Theban lyre:
> " Wrapt in historic ardour, who adore
> " Each classic haunt, and well-remember'd shore,
> " Where Valour tun'd, amid her chosen throng,
> " The Thracian trumpet and the Spartan song:
> " Or, wandering thence, beheld the later charms
> " Of England's glory, and Helvetia's arms:
> " See Roman fire in Hampden's bosom swell,
> " And fate and freedom in the shaft of Tell:
> " Say, ye fond zealots to the worth of yore,
> " Hath Valour left the world—to live no more?
> " No more shall Brutus bid a tyrant die,
> " And sternly smile with vengeance in his eye?
> " Hampden no more, when suffering freedom calls,
> " Encounter fate, and triumphs as he falls?
> " Nor Tell disclose, through peril and alarm,
> " The might that slumbers in a peasant's arm?"

Again:

> " And say, supernal powers! who deeply scan
> " Heav'n's dark decrees, unfathom'd yet by man,
> " When shall the world call down, to cleanse her shame,
> " That embryo spirit,—yet without a name,—
> " That friend of Nature, whose avenging hands
> " Shall burst the Libyan's adamantine bands?
> " Who sternly marking on his native soil,
> " The blood, the tears, the anguish, and the toil,
> " Shall bid each righteous heart exult, to see
> " Peace to the slave, and vengeance on the free!"

It yet remains to pay the tribute of admiration to the noblest of all this poem's splendid qualities—its sublimity. Of that magnificent faculty—the purest source of rapture—the loftiest endowment of genius—" the attribute of God himself"—there

are several examples, so transcendently glorious, that even if they were unattended by any other meritorious passages, they might alone obtain immortality for their author.

Kosciusko's defence of Poland, is thus admirably recounted:

"Low, murm'ring sounds along their banners fly,
"Revenge, or death—the watchword and reply:
"Then peal'd the notes, omnipotent to charm,
"And the loud tocsin roll'd their last alarm!"

"In vain, alas! ye gallant few!
"From rank to rank your volley'd thunder flew:---
"Oh! bloodiest picture in the book of Time,
"Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime;
"Found not a generous friend, a pitying foe,
"Strength in her arms, nor mercy in her woe!
"Dropp'd from her nerveless grasp the shatter'd spear,
"Clos'd her bright eye, and curb'd her high career;—
"Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,
"And Freedom shriek'd---as Kosciusko fell!"

"The sun went down, nor ceas'd the carnage there,
"Tumultuous murder shook the midnight air---
"On Prague's proud arch the fires of ruin glow,
"His blood-dy'd waters murm'ring far below;
"The storm prevails, the rampart yields a way
"Bursts the wild cry of horror and dismay!
"Hark! as the smouldering piles with thunder fall,
"A thousand shrieks for hopeless mercy call!"

The descent of the god Brama, to the aid of oppressed India, occasions the following splendid lines:

"Of India's fate her guardian spirits tell,
"Prophetic murmurs breathing on the shell,
"And solemn sounds, that awe the list'ning mind,
"Roll on the azure paths of ev'ry wind."

"'Foes of mankind! (her guardian spirits say)
"'Revolving ages bring the bitter day,
"'When Heav'n's unerring arm shall fall on you,
"'And blood for blood these Indian plains bedew;
"'Nine times have Brama's wheels of light'ning hurl'd
"'His awful presence o'er the alarmed world;
"'Nine times hath Guilt, through all his giant frame,

" ' Convulsive trembled, as the mighty came:
" ' Nine times hath suffering Mercy spar'd in vain—
" ' But heav'n shall burst her starry gales again!' "

" He comes! dread Brama shakes the sunless sky,
" With murmuring wrath, and thunders from on high!
" Heaven's fiery horse, beneath his warrior form,
" Paws the light clouds, and gallops on the storm!
" Wide waves his flickering sword; his bright arms glow
" Like summer suns, and light the world below!

Let the reader take the trouble to observe the succeeding description of a comet's creation, existence, and extinction—if he observe, he cannot but admire.

" Hark! from the world's exploding centre driv'n,
" With sounds that shook the firmament of Heav'n,
" Careers the fiery giant, fast and far,
" On bick'ring wheels and adamantine car:
" From planet whirl'd to planet more remote,
" He visits realms beyond the reach of thought;
" But, wheeling homeward, when his course is run,
" Curbs the red yoke, and mingles with the sun!

This series shall be terminated with the passage that concludes the Poem: a passage which, for the grandeur, extent and variety of the ideas, the astonishing skill with which they are combined, and the harmony and sublimity of their general effect, seems almost to defy competition itself.

" Eternal Hope! when yonder spheres sublime
" Peal'd their first notes to sound the march of Time,
" Thy joyous youth began---but not to fade.—
" When all the sister planets have decay'd;
" When wrapt in fire, the realms of ether glow,
" And Heaven's last thunder shakes the world below;
" Thou, undismay'd, shalt o'er the ruins smile,
" And light thy torch at Nature's funeral pile!

The immense and abstract conceptions of time, eternity, and the wreck of the universe, have betrayed hundreds of adventurous poets into absurdity and bombast. But those mighty masses that overwhelm a common mind, are upborne with graceful ease by Mr. Campbell's genius: and the fable of

Atlas seems at length to have arrived at its fulfilment. In these few lines, the origin of Time from eternity, the rejoicings of Nature at his birth, the coeval creation of Hope, and their concurrent progress even to the ultimate submersion of Time in that eternity from which he rose, the final destruction of matter, and the sweet and sublime devotion of surviving Hope, as she lifts her eyes to everlasting bliss, and illuminates her torch at the pile where perishing Nature lies enveloped in flames—form a picture on which it is impossible to dwell without the loftiest rapture—although it would be vain to expatiate on its beauties, unless the critic partook those stupendous powers which promise to immortalize the poet!

THE HISTORY OF BARBADOES, FROM THE FIRST DISCOVERY OF THE ISLAND, 1605, TILL THE ACCESSION OF LORD SEAFORTH, 1801. BY JOHN POYER. *pp.* 668. *4to.*—*Mawman*, 1808.

THE details of Colonial History rarely excite much curiosity, or awaken much speculation. Moving as do the parent states in the higher sphere of power, the eloquence of senates, the secret springs of cabinets, and the events of battles, seem peculiarly their own. All that renders history amusing or instructive, appears to proceed from their energy, or their policy. It is not considered that the strength of a mighty empire is made up of auxiliaries, as the rapidity of a river arises from the multitude of its streams. In proportion as the colonies are rich and productive, the mother country will be great and flourishing. In proportion as they advance to, or proceed beyond the political equilibrium of colonial policy, if they be small we may expect murmurs, if they be great we may dread danger.—They merit then our peculiar consideration; that we should trace their interests, investigate the sources of their prosperity, and mark the periods of their rise and decline. Con-

nected as they are to us in civil polity, and in alliance, whatever relates to their laws, their manners, their customs, their institutions, may prove illustrative of our own, and whilst seen on a smaller scale, and abstracted from prejudice or party feelings, might come home to our domestic business.

The colonies have indeed been formed at the most interesting periods of our history.—Not driven out by the order of Nature, which decrees that men shall seek other countries when their own is incapable of supporting them, nor exiled by the force of arms, which has propelled the inhabitants of one hemisphere to devastate another, Englishmen have sought asylums on foreign shores, from the hand of power and oppression.—They have cherished the flame of liberty in wilds and in deserts, and they have given to man another and a freer world.

The work before us contains a history of one of the most antient of our West-Indian Colonies. The island of Barbadoes was the first of note in the great Indian Archipelago that displayed the British flag—And it has been one of the most patriotic in defending it. Settled by the adherents to the first Charles, it resolutely opposed the arms of the usurper of his crown, and continued the steady friend of the successor to its king, when the rest of the world had forsaken him.

The importance however of a colony to its parent state, consists in something more than its loyalty.

We were much surprised that the author before us has taken notice of little more than the cold languid uninteresting domestic concerns of Barbadoes. With a deep spirit of philosophical inquiry, he has indeed penetrated into most of its laws, with a masterly hand he has touched on one of the chords of its prosperity, the freedom of its constitution, but of its population he has said little, of its commerce nothing.—These appear to us to be the only parts of colonial history interesting to English readers. The contention of governors with their assemblies, the pliancy of councils, the œconomy of

presidents, and the public spirit of juries, may indeed furnish matter for West-Indian encomiums or blame, but all readers are not West-Indians.

Nothing can be more flat or insipid, than for us gravely to be told, in a serious history, that ladies, in order to save the expence of an illegal tax on licenses, were out-asked in church, or that a new-married pair were thrown, by the violence of a hurricane, into a pimploe hedge.

Nor is it of importance to say, that the author has not done much, because he promised little. It is chimerical to judge of authors by the excuses of ordinary men, as their only object should be, to instruct and improve mankind.

He who has little to tell, need not write, nor is the world in such want of books as to stand in need of trite or common-place information. It expects from every man who sets up to instruct it, that he shall be more than ordinarily acquainted with the object of his labour, and to readers it is of little importance whether the defects of a work proceed from ignorance or from want of inquiry in its author. To apologize, indeed, is easy, but apologies can never atone for the want of industry. He who sets out on careless or erroneous principles, and hopes to compensate for the defects of his judgment, or the ill consequences of his laziness, by awkward submissions, will find himself rewarded with the contempt of mankind.

Passing over then the grand œconomical reforms of a president, who put out the lamps at Pilgrim for the purpose of saving their oil; and the magnanimous motion of the assembly for suppressing the morning gun at Bridge Town, in order that his majesty's stores might not be wasted; and all that appears to us, useless and uninteresting; we shall confine ourselves to the laws and the state of the slaves in Barbadoes, interspersing such information as might illustrate the condition of the colony.

We are the more severe on this occasion, as the writer before us is a man of real genius, and although by his transatlantic

situation, his writing chiefly for the information of West-Indians, and the Keeper of the Public Records, *singulari suâ humanitate!* through his remarkable zeal for letters, with "more than Spanish jealousy," refusing him access to the journal of the assembly, he laboured under much embarrassment in the conduct of his work, we still think, that he might have rendered it more full, more complete, and more interesting to the general reader.

The constitution of Barbadoes, like that of our other West-Indian settlements, is made up of a Governor, Council, and Assembly.

It might at first sight appear, that the representative of the crown in a distant country, from the strength of the royal prerogative, from the variety and extent of his offices, and from the short period of his appointment, which rarely exceeds six years, might frequently be disposed to act arbitrarily and tyrannically. The Assembly, however, are the masters of the Barbadian revenue, and possess the power, and do not want the inclination to curtail the income of the governor, whenever his administration is displeasing to the people. This effectually keeps him subservient to them. The fear of this exercise of power has indeed, in several instances, induced the governor to resign some of those branches of the prerogative that constitute the chief strength of the crown: and the appointment to several offices of trust and honour, and, as it would seem, the regulation of the money of the country, are in the hands of the representatives of the people. This, though unconstitutional, is, we believe, useful to the colony; as in an assembly consisting only of twenty-two members, it would be easy, had the governor the appointment to all places of emolument, to introduce much venality and corruption. The council is always greatly under the power of the governor.

As a branch of the legislature, indeed, the council, from their very appointment and constitution, are necessarily defective. Recommended to office by the executive, and debating

in his presence, it is impossible that they can escape the reality or the suspicion of influence: and in an estate of government, either is equally injurious to the commonwealth. Founded, as is government, on public opinion, public opinion cannot be too much consulted in its formation and in its objects: nor is it material whether the functions of administration be weakened by the servility of its members, or by the contempt of the people.

As a branch of the judicial capacity of the crown, the council is equally censurable. Scarce can a petition be received, or a decision be appealed against, in which its members, from their local connections, are not interested; whilst the division of duty, amongst many, weakens the responsibility of all. Add to this, that experience in the mysteries of law, cannot be expected from those who have been educated for other, and perhaps higher objects, than the lucre of a profession.

The chief advantage of the council seems to consist in their participation of measures with the executive, and, in times of popular discontent, in their consequent participation of odium. They are the shield of the Commander-in-Chief, against which the darts of the people are thrown and spent.

The assembly is the popular branch of colonial government, and, of course, the favourite of the people. Its members are chosen annually; a measure which often occasions many serviceable motions and advantageous bills to be suspended in their passage through this house and lost, whilst the dependance which it creates of the members, on their constituents, renders them factious and turbulent.

The temper of the Barbadoes House of Assembly, indeed, appears peculiarly hot and inflammable. Not a session passes, but they are at war with the governor, the council, or themselves: and the whole meeting appears to be an opposition. Their measures, however, are often salutary, their councils wise, and their speeches eloquent. They appear to be a body

desirous of promoting the public good, and only failing through an anxiety of obtaining the applause of their constituents, and the popularity of the ignorant multitude. Their conduct to one of their governors, who laid on the people an illegal impost, was firm and manly. And although we know not how to approve the patriotism which might ruin a constitution, by refusing the supplies necessary for its existence, at least we may be allowed to applaud it.

There are upwards of thirty judges in the little island of Barbadoes, not four of whom, according to our author's estimate of their legal learning, ever explored the mysteries of Burn's Justice. We presume, there is something in the air of this flourishing colony, that inspires the legal erudition, or something in the soil that expands the consciences of this tribe of judges. Climate, according to some philosophers, is of wonderful effect in quickening the talents of men.

The whole criminal law business of the island, in spite of the swarm of judges, is thrown on the shoulders of his Majesty's Attorney-General, who performs the duty of a prosecutor, a judge, and, we may add, of a jury, in one and the same breath. The orations of this pleader, if collected, would certainly give birth to a new species of eloquence, as they obviously are neither demonstrative, deliberative, nor judicial.

The chief point to which we would draw the attention of our readers, is the state of slavery in Barbadoes. And here again we cannot help regretting, that our author has treated so great a subject with such negligence. It would have been a beautiful and an interesting picture, to have delineated the shades of discrimination between the African, fresh from the wildness of his desarts, and domesticated in the slave-yards of the West Indies, to have shewn how the native fierceness of the freeman is lost in the degradation of the slave, or how the warmer vices of his soul are clouded by the hypocrisy, or rendered violent by the impulses, of a more enlightened

superstition. It would have been pleasing to have seen the Negroes in their domestic haunts: at the hoe, at the ball, or the funeral. Mournful, indeed, is the lot of slavery; its very joys are sorrowing, its very pleasures pathetic! No festivities mark the birth of a child, or the connubial rites of a pair, but the Negro utters his plaintive song at the funeral of the dead, and rejoices that one slave less has ceased to groan in the world.

It must not be disguised, that although transported from their own shores, and doomed to a life of hopeless slavery, the Negroes are still comparatively happy. Supported by the interested cares of their owners, they know not the wants or the miseries of a savage state. Induced to enter into the dearest connections of life, those of husband and of parent, they no longer dread the savage hand of the spoiler to violate and destroy them. Protected by the power or by the wealth of proprietors, they enjoy the better and more valuable rights of freemen,—protection from violence, and security from oppression. Still, however, they are slaves! They feel not the wants, the hopes, the expectations, that bind man the more strongly to freedom and to life. They are prevented by their situation, from that moral and intellectual improvement, which, conducive as it is to our happiness, nature meant for man. Who that had a mind to consider, or a soul to choose, would resign freedom, however savage, for the caprice of a tyrant, for degradation and for disgrace?

Even in slavery, the British constitution, though the boast and the pride of free men, has afforded a protecting spirit that cherishes and soothes that unhappy race of men. The British are the most humane slave-owners among the islanders, and uniformly temper the severity of the master, with the liberality of the Englishman. The inhabitant of Holland, possessing a republican pride that arises from his laws and his political prejudices, contemns and abhors the slave. The Frenchman is too much inured to slavery, to respect or cherish it.

In the equal laws of Britain only, and in the sentiments they induce, are we taught to feel and think as men.

It must be confessed, however, that little care seems to have been taken by the Barbadians to instruct the minds of their Negroes. They are represented as a vindictive race, whom no religious or moral obligation can bind to speak the truth. But the fact is fully solved by the confession that they are Pagans, or at least addicted to the ambiguous rites of Obiah.

Nothing is more certain or more lamentable in the state of slavery, than that the immediate interests of owners are repugnant to the forms of education. Millions of the human race, have, in all ages, groaned from their tyrants looking to little more than the product of their manual labour. Happy for man, had it been considered that the only mode to increase it, is to enlighten the people. The proprietors of slaves have a nearer and a dearer interest in their instruction. In the insurrections that are frequent in the countries of slaves, what can calm their ferocity and abate the savageness of those just liberated from chains, but the remonstrances of reason, and the holy doctrines of the Gospel?

The laws, for and against slaves in Barbadoes, are often tinged with blood, but, like all laws where the interests of the state are repugnant, they are but little observed. Masters know too well the services of their slaves, to injure them in life or limb.

If a slave strike a christian; for the first offence, he shall be severely flogged; for the second, he shall have his nose slit, and be burned in the face with a red-hot iron. If a slave kill a slave, he shall die; but it matters not whether the homicide were in self-defence and justifiable, or voluntary and criminal.

The death of a Negro was of real loss to a proprietor, and it could not be too much discouraged, but it was not seen, that in case the law were rigidly carried into effect, two would be destroyed instead of one.

If any slave, under punishment by his master or his order, shall suffer in life or member, no one shall be liable to any fine for it. And till of late, if any person wantonly kill his own slave, he shall pay, into the public treasury, fifteen pounds. If he intentionally kill the slave of another, besides paying the owner double the price, and twenty-five pounds to the treasury, he shall be bound to keep the peace during the pleasure of the governor.

This law is now repealed, being much condemned in England, and exposing the Barbadians to censure even from their transatlantic fellow-subjects. The murderer of a slave is at present punished as a murderer.

The historian defends the late law as mild, placable, efficient for its purpose. Of a population of 75,000 black inhabitants, though no ordinary degree of diligence was pursued by Lord Seaforth, in following up the inquisition, sixteen only, within the memory of man, were found to have been killed by the whites, and of these, only six can be branded with the appellation of being murdered. Whereas, in the same space of time, the murders committed by whites on whites, were more frequent. What does this prove, but that the law, so much abused, is equally, if not more efficient, for the first end of human legislation, the prevention of crimes, than the one at present enacted? Where the interests of men are strong, they will not often be tempted to violate them, nor will an owner voluntarily destroy a slave by whom he, in some degree, earns his own livelihood; nor will a stranger commit the same offence when he is to be mulcted so heavily for it. It might have been added, that revenge and the love of gain, whence murders usually proceed, are passions little called forth by slaves; so much are they beneath the consideration of the whites, and excluded as they are by the laws from the acquirement of property: that where disparity of condition exists in a state, we should not expect equality of laws: that more especially where free man and slave are known to the

constitution, does policy require a broad line of distinction to be drawn between them; and that, suppose there be strong symptoms of a revolt in a plantation, is it not wrong to take from the proprietor a severity which might be the salvation of his family, and of general benefit to the colony?

Humanity, however, prevailed, and as it should, by all law, human and divine, blood was atoned for by blood.

There is another law, which, though of a different class, deserves to be mentioned here, and which this author stigmatizes as barbarous and inhuman. By a statute enacted under Mr. Pinfold's administration, slaves are considered as goods or chattels, and may be taken in execution for debt. The propriety of this law may be questioned in a political point of view, as tending to deaden the moral susceptibility of the slave, but in a moral light it deserves execration.

"By this barbarous and erroneous policy," says the author, "the wretched slave is dragged from the scene of his enjoyments, "torn from the hallowed spot that contains the remains of the "mother whom he revered, the wife whom he loved, or the child "that was dear to his heart; dispossessed of the little property "which bestowed on him an ideal importance in the eyes of his "fellow labourer, and sold into a new bondage in a distant part "of the country, under the dominion of an unknown master. "Separated from the only consolation that can beguile the rigour "of servitude, these wretched victims of avarice and folly, often "sink into a premature grave."

Of the mode of proceeding on the trial of slaves, it may be proper to take some notice in this place. Plunged by the hand of fate into endless servitude, and born to sustain the labours of others, this degraded race of beings are yet not denied some of the privileges of men. Even here, however, their trial, their prosecution, and their punishment, or their acquittal and re-establishment in slavery, seem obviously meted by the interests of others. It is not the negroes who are the avengers of justice, or who cause the mitigation of punishment in the colonies, but the master, whose estate would suffer by the diminution of their number, or whose

authority would be diminished by the impunity of their offences. This at once begets cruelty in the legislator, and forbearance in the breast of the judge; and whilst it teaches us the contradictory temper of tyranny, shews there are remedies in the order of nature to cure even the evils of slavery. Hard, indeed, would be the condition of him who is deprived of that will, which by the moral responsibility annexed to the enjoyment of it, nature intended for her creatures, were there not in the circle of man's civil progression, some compensation for its loss, some atonement, however slight, for its involuntary sacrifice. But to return to the manner of proceeding on the trial of slaves.

"In all common cases, a Justice of the Peace is empowered to "hear the complaint, and proceed to judgment; and on the most "ordinary and trivial aggressions, the evidence of the first gentle- "men in Barbadoes, against the worst negro, is given on *oath*. "But in cases of *felony*, two Justices of the Peace are required "to take cognizance of the offence, and to summon a jury of three "freeholders; not merely of the vicinity, lest any partiality "should be used in the selection, but who are nearest to the spot "where the felonious act was committed. Here the same forma- "lity is practised, as in all judicial proceedings. The accused is "confronted with his accuser and the witnesses; he has counsel "assigned him at the expence of his master, and every means "known to the courts at Westminster Hall, are employed in the "full and fair investigation of the cause. When the evidence is "closed, the magistrates and the jury, collectively, are left to de- "cide, and a single dissentient absolves the prisoner from guilt. "If he is convicted, there yet remains another chance of saving "him from the sentence of the law, the right of appeal to the "Governor and Council; *a right which is usually exercised*, "whenever there is the least prospect of its being successful."

"To this trial," says the author, "the only objection which "can possibly exist, is to the number of the jury. It might, "however, be doubted by the sceptical inquirer, whether the "mode of trial, which was intended to guard the rights of free men, "be in reality an acquisition to slaves. The trial by jury, it "might be said, does not create in the breast of the slave that high "assurance, that his cause will be canvassed by justice and im- "partiality, which is its best characteristic; but degraded as is "the negro in condition, he sees in his jurymen whites, who "are the enemies of his race. Nor would *his* rights be affected "by that summary process, which usually marks governments that

"are despotical, and nations that are enslaved; for what rights "in effect has a slave to lose? But in reality the owners of slaves "are humane from policy, and sedulous of their lives from interest; "and the deliberative slowness of the trial by Jury, gives time "to these calculating principles of our nature to expand and "operate."

This is all we could gather from our author on the state of slavery in Barbadoes—a subject which, of all others, interests our feelings and warms our imaginations. It is lamentable to think, that there are so many thousands of our fellow-creatures lost to morals, to science, and to humanity, through the selfish and base purpose of pampering the luxuries of a few of their species. Policy may indeed require that the prescription of property remain inviolate, and justice may dictate that what has been established by public sanction, should be guarded by public faith; but the time is not far distant when the Negroes will assert the native independence of their nature, and bury their chains amid the ruins of their oppressors. They have now the example of Hayti before their eyes, nor is there any thing so dreadful in rebellion as the abjectness of slavery. It needs but time and the accession of a few ideas, which the abolition of the slave trade will tend to excite, to turn them loose on their owners. Dreadful indeed will be the havoc that will ensue! But we turn our eyes with horror and dismay from the contemplation of this scene, nor will we call up the prophetic spirit to lap the blood of our brethren. The lesson, however, may be learned by statesmen, how dangerous it is to disturb the natural order of society, and to expose so foul an example to the world, as that the right of the stronger should be the rule of the universe.

The cries of politicians for the decline of population, are usually weak and chimerical. Arising, as does marriage, from the intentions of nature, and by no means proceeding from the artificial refinements of man, it will ever furnish citizens for the state, if there be room for their labour, or food for their support. But Barbadoes is placed under peculiar

circumstances. The newly-settled southern colonies, offer abundant field for industry and speculation; the proprietors of plantations find it their interest to elude the laws which enact, that there shall be cottages for poorer tenants, in proportion to the number of their acres; the slaves who are trained up by their owners for this purpose, turn the poorer whites fairly out of the market of competition, as artisans or mechanics. Thus exiled from home, this unhappy people are forced to seek a miserable subsistence on foreign shores, and Barbadoes is deprived of the most valuable of her citizens. This is an evil particularly to be dreaded, in a country whose population consists of slaves as well as free men. The former must gain boldness from numbers, nor is there any chance for victory to the whites, when they may be so greatly overpowered by the physical force of their opponents. The enforcement of the militia act, by which the planter may be obliged to send armed whites into the field, and the discouragement of slaves in the mechanical arts, are recommended by our author as remedies for this evil. But perhaps the abolition of the slave trade will do more for its suppression, than positive statutes, which are always either useless or dangerous when they go counter to the interests of men. It will now be to the advantage of the proprietor, to bring up his slave to the cultivation of the soil, as he can no longer rely on Africa for supplies for his *gang*.

It now remains that we should give our opinion concerning the general merits of the work. It might be said of this history, as of the Palace of the Sun, that the materials are of less value than the execution of the workmanship. The history of a small colony is not likely to afford much information, that is amusing or instructive; and the author has abridged the value of his work, by neglecting some of the materials. The little he possessed, he has rendered still less important by with-holding half. We question, however, whether the work would have been really more interesting, by

an addition of political matter. It is already heavy and cold, and wears more the appearance of a political treatise, than of a genuine history. It wants the soul of history, splendid personages, illustrious actions, brilliant achievements, great events. All that swells the imagination, or elevates the feelings, is not here to be found, and is ill supplied by the petty debates of a remote assembly, or the humble pliancy of an ill-constituted council. All that could be done by a man of genius, the author has perhaps effected. He is perspicuous without being languid, and dignified although sometimes pompous. Occasionally, indeed, he might have retrenched much awkward ornament, and generally have consulted ease more and correctness in his style: but this history is a splendid fête in the Barbadian annals, and will deserve much better to be recorded, than most of the events in the pages before us. Nor will the colonists triumph less, that it was written three thousand miles from the seat of arts, learning, and refinement. The situation, indeed, of a writer should at all times be considered in estimating the merits of his work. The transatlantic author before us was attended by many disadvantages in the prosecution of his history, which, as they were beyond his control, we should rather consider as in some degree redounding to his credit. In spite however of his strained manner, his cumbrous attempts at the pathetic, and his occasional dryness of style, there is so much good sense, so much candour, and so much unaffected patriotism in the book, that we cannot help thinking it deserves a better fate than from its want of interest it will probably experience.

MRS. INCHBALD'S BRITISH THEATRE. *(Continued.)*

HAVING in the last number gone through our remarks on Mrs. Inchbald's Theatrical Criticisms, as far as they relate to the works of Shakspeare, it now remains to notice her observations on the minor luminaries of the British drama.

Mrs. Inchbald prefaces her edition of the comedy of "Rule "a Wife and have a Wife," with some observations on the two brother-poets, Beaumont and Fletcher. She very justly remarks, that "to the querulous and vain, it must be a "subject of astonishment, how two persons could derive fame "so directly from the same source as writing plays together, "without contending which had the strongest claim to that "general admiration which their productions excited. But "all accounts upon this point are merely conjectural; for "the authors behaved too much like men, to disclose the "secret means of their labour; and here a curious enquirer "after facts, might almost wish they had been women."

The Reviewer trusts Mrs. Inchbald will forgive him for entering his protest against the concluding sentence of this quotation, and for declaring it as his decided opinion, notwithstanding the proverbial notion that has given a name to one of our comedies, that a secret is to the full as safe in the breast of a woman, as in that of a man. The conjectural criticism of the editors of the joint works of these poets, has however supplied the intelligence which their candour denied; for in the late editions, the precise labours of each are defined, with nearly as much exactness, as if the critic had been the most confidential friend of both.

The censure of the conduct of the fable, and the morality of the female characters in this entertaining play, does honour to the fair critic; but when we accede to her concluding remark, that "to preserve its fame on the stage, no common

" performers can be entrusted with the charge," we must reflect on how many of our plays the same remark is equally applicable.

The alteration of the comedy of " the Chances," by Villiers, Duke of Buckingham and Garrick, though perhaps necessary for the theatric representation, certainly takes off from the intrinsic merit of the play, however careless the united poets generally are in the catastrophe of their pieces, they seldom deviate from consistency of character; but the Don John of Villiers and of Garrick, is not the Don John of Beaumont and Fletcher.

To the opinion of Mrs. Inchbald that Massinger's comedy, " A New Way to pay Old Debts," though a very admirable play, is not altogether a pleasing one, we cannot implicitly assent; surely it affords an abundant source of amusement; no doubt it has many faults, but the fault attributed to Massinger and many past dramatists (and writers of novels may be added) " of bestowing spirit, life, and every powerful emotion of the soul, upon the wicked, and making all their good people insipid," must be imputed, not to the poet, but to the general feelings of mankind. This it is not the intention of the Reviewer to try to account for here, and still less to vindicate: but undoubtedly Lothario is a more popular character than Altamont, and Lovelace than Sir Charles Grandison. With regard to female characters, we are more just; there virtue always confers dignity, and no vice can be so elevated as not to excite hatred or contempt: in women there is no poetic goodness, distinguished from moral goodness.

In Mrs. Inchbald's remarks on Dryden's " All for Love," this passage occurs: " Who can be inattentive to the loves " of Marc Antony? (why not Mark Anthony, if his name " must be Anglicised?) Yet, thus described, their fate in re- " presentation seldom draws a tear, or gives rise to one " transport of passion in the breast of the most discerning

"auditor. There is certainly in this short history, compared "with more copious ones, a diminution of Cleopatra's faults; "yet her character is by no means so graced with virtues, "and dignified by heroism in this drama, as in the tragedy "of Pompée, by the great Corneille." Surely the reason of this is sufficiently obvious. Plays, drawn from Greek and Roman history, have never yet been interesting; and the character of "Cæsar's Cleopatra, Anthony's Cleopatra, "every body's Cleopatra," is too well known to an English audience to have permitted them to endure, at the time when Dryden wrote, the heroic dignity given to her by Corneille, any more than they would now endure to see the part of the Triumvir acted in a tye-wig and a full-dressed coat.

The remarks on the two celebrated tragedies of Southern, "Isabella" and "Oroonoko," are in general just, but have not much claim to novelty; and where the critic has attempted novelty, she has not always been happy in the attempt: speaking of Isabella's conduct to her creditors, whom she calls "ravening blood-hounds," Mrs. Inchbald says, "A charac- "ter only half as amiable as the author meant her to appear, "could not conduct herself towards her creditors, but with "the most profound respect. Indeed was Isabella largely "indebted to any one among these men, and had not the means "of payment—moral argument, perhaps, could prove, she "was as much in honour bound to marry *him* for the value "received, as to marry Villeroy." This is indeed "A new way to pay to old debts," but which in a drama would command a large accompaniment of hisses, though perhaps many a widow might be ready to adopt it in real life. It is not impossible that a sheriff's officer may have as much honour as a soldier, a sailor, or even that object of modern dramatic excellence, a blundering Irishman; but though the stage has exhibited sentimental ploughmen and braziers, it has not yet ventured on a sentimental bailiff.

Mrs. Inchbald gives a very just eulogium on the perform-

ance of Oroonoko, by Pope; but it surely deserved notice, that it was also performed by Garrick on the revival of the play, many years ago, when the licentious part of the comic dialogue, as in the present edition, was first suppressed; a circumstance worthy of notice, as he performed it with the greatest success, which was never the case with his Othello; though the same objection as to his figure, and the hiding the discriminating powers of his features, which was one of his excellencies, is applicable to both.

Mrs. Inchbald observes of Zara, that "it is impossible to "read this play without being delighted, or to see it without "being weary:" to the latter part of this assertion, we cordially assent, but not to the former; she also says, that suppose the author of Zara, a religious man, and the play "be-"comes instantly a production of the most virtuous tendency." The supposition is impossible, every intelligent reader must see through the whole drama, that the author is adverse to all religion, but especially to that of Christianity.

In the eighth volume, we find the four comedies of Farquhar, which now keep their place on the stage. The preliminary notes to each play are chiefly filled by anecdotes of the poet's life, which would have been better thrown together under one head. Why Mrs. Inchbald should have particularly chosen her remarks on the "Constant Couple," to tell us that "the theatre has peculiar charms for men of letters," is not very clear. She, however, very justly, censures the improbability of two lovers, like Col. Standard and Lady Lurewell, not recollecting each other till the catastrophe. With equal propriety she censures the disguise of Sylvia in the "Recruiting Officer." Such events, however, she truly observes, "were considered as perfectly natural in former "times;" a circumstance that seems perfectly unaccountable, especially as these disguises are more frequent when we go back to those times when female characters were performed by lads. A young man playing the part of a woman, in man's

clothes, must appear very absurd to the spectators, who are generally in the secret; but it must have been worse than absurd, when the lover and his disguised mistress recognize each other at the close of the drama.

It is rather odd, that Mrs. Inchbald should not have noticed, that the plot, and even some of the names in the Inconstant, are taken from Beaumont and Fletcher's "Wild-"Goose Chace." And when she says of the Beaux Stratagem, that, "charmed with the spirit of Archer and Aimwell, "the reader may not, perhaps, immediately perceive that "those two fine gentlemen are but arrant impostors;" she might have added, and unfeeling unmannerly brutes. Can any thing be more grossly brutal, than what Aimwell says to his friend in the last scene? "Take the twenty-thousand pounds, or the lady;" except the answer of Archer, who, when Dorinda expresses some indignant surprise at the offer, says, "his lordship knows very well that I'll take the money."

Of the tragedy of Cato, Mrs. Inchbald remarks, that "notwithstanding the merit of this play, it is certain that it "was indebted to the political circumstances of the times for "that enthusiastic applause with which it was received by "the town." The merit of Cato as a play, has been long given up; the Reviewer is bold enough to deny it merit as a poem, which it has been the fashion to give it. Surely there must be a radical defect in any work, when the principal character is drawn diametrically opposite to the author's obvious and avowed intention. Addison meant Cato for a zealous republican; but in Utica, he is a despot; he meant him for a stoic, and he flies out into intemperate warmth, because his son interrupts his platonic soliloquy. Pope, in his satire on the poet, gives the true picture of his hero, who certainly

> "—— Gives his little senate laws,
> And sits attentive to his own applause."

but in this picture we see no likeness to the republican or the stoic.

As the satiric poet Churchill has chosen to compare Cato with Sir John Brute, it is singular enough that the "Provoked Wife" should immediately follow Cato in this edition. The abominable profligacy and indecency exhibited in almost every scene of this comedy of Vanbrugh, very properly meets with severe reprehension from the fair critic.

Mrs. Inchbald does justice to the merits of that pleasing Comedy, "Love makes a Man," and to the ingenuity of Cibber, who so happily blended in one drama, "the Elder Brother," and "the Custom of the Country," of Beaumont and Fletcher. However low it was the fashion of the poets of his time to estimate Cibber, he was generally a popular dramatic writer; for, as Mrs. Inchbald excellently expresses it, "While many a judicious critic boasted of knowing what "kind of drama the public *ought* to like; Cibber was the "lucky dramatist generally to know what they *would* like, "whether they ought or not." Whatever most refined critics may say of classic dramas written by elegant scholars in the closet, theory as well as experience have shewn, that every dramatic poet who has attained celebrity, has been actually acquainted with the business of the Theatre. The theory is as old as Aristotle; the fact is confirmed by every good dramatist from Æschylus to Sheridan.

Of the "Careless Husband" it was the fashion of the contemporary wits to say it could not have been written by Cibber, on account of its merit. Were I to accede to that opinion, it would be on account of its insipidity. Mrs. Inchbald calls this "an excellent, a moral comedy." Where can be the excellence of a drama, where she herself allows, "there are no violent passions such as are usually depicted on a stage, but merely such as commonly govern mankind?" In fact the piece is without plot or interest, and merely consists of the common chitchat of persons of rank; and where are we to look

for the morality? In the manners of Sir Charles Easy, Lord Foppington, Lady Graveairs, or Edging?

Of the four Tragedies of Rowe, which are published in this edition, only the "Fair Penitent," and "Jane Shore," can now be considered as in possession of the Theatre. Every one must agree with Mrs. Inchbald, that of the first, the Fair Penitent is a complete misnomer, for never was there a more determined profligate than Calista. The following assertion however seems a little problematical, that "now, enlightened by a degree of masculine study, women's taste and judgement being improved—this best consequence of all ensues---men must improve to win them." Whether our fashionable coxcombs now turn chemists, politicians, and metaphysicians, to please the ladies, or the ladies adopt the same studies to please them, may admit of a doubt in the opinion of some enquirers. Perhaps there may be those who think, that, though *some few* ladies may not exactly conform to the habits of those men with whom they are particularly connected, the sex in general will adopt those habits which they think will render them most agreeable to ours, and that even those gentlemen who choose the costume and the pursuits of coachmen, will even now find as their counterparts, postillions in petticoats.

The concluding remark, that the seduction of unmarried women is not at this time so common as that of married women among persons of rank; and that therefore this play is not now an example to them, seem wonderful from the pen of a dramatic writer. The only question is whether the event is not probable enough for dramatic incident, and its consequences for tragic pathos. If every play is censurable that does not hold up a moral example to persons of rank, where is the playwright who shall escape?

The appellation of Fair Penitent might with much more propriety have been given to Jane Shore, than to Calista: the concluding remark on this play seems still more surprising

even than that on the last, when we consider it as coming from a person so intimately acquainted with the feelings of the human heart as Mrs. Inchbald has shewn herself to be, both in her dramatic and narrative writings.

The passage alluded to is this: Mrs. Inchbald, after having observed that "Alicia's calamities are far more heavy than that of the famished Shore," concludes thus:

> "The parting scene between her and the condemned Hastings, "where he forgives her as the cause of his immediate execution, "has something more affecting than the last scene of the drama, "where Shore forgives his dying wife. The husband's pardon "comes after time has softened and penitence mitigated his "wrongs.—The *lover* forgives a more fatal injury, and its conse- "quences that moment impending."

The Reviewer confesses he never could find any thing affecting in the parting scene between Hastings and Alicia. He is not a *lover* who forgives, but a dying sinner who repents. While Shore is a fond husband, reconciled to a penitent wife, of whose sincere and steady reformation he had been a witness, and whom he is on the point of losing; Alicia and Jane Shore are by no means equal in the eyes of the spectator. They both suffer in consequence of guilt; but the guilt of Jane Shore arose from female weakness, long before the opening of the drama, and sincerely repented of; the guilt of Alicia is that of a fiend, and acted in the face of the Theatre. Besides, as most of u derive our first knowledge of Jane Shore from the old ditty, we are apt, when we see Alicia, to think of her prototype Mrs. Blague, of which Rowe has very injudiciously reminded us by the circumstance of Jane Shore delivering the casket to her in the first act.

Mrs. Inchbald prefaces her remarks on Mrs. Centlivre's Comedies, with an apology for female dramatic writers: Surely no apology was necessary for a circumstance which has given to the British Theatre the humour of Mrs. Centlivre, and the pathos of Mrs. Inchbald. The first however must be acknowledged as the more extraordinary endowment in a female wri-

ter, for the same reason that the latter, as being more consonant with the female character, is the more amiable one.

Of the Tragedies of Lillo, what Mrs. Inchbald says of the Fatal Curiosity, may in some degree be applied to George Barnwell, viz. "that for want of that robust constitution which implies "strength of mind as well as body, an audience shrinks from be- "holding it performed." Those persons who possess such a constitutional firmness, as not to find the pathos of these private-life tragedies carried to an excess that is painful, are better calculated for mathematical than poetical pursuits. We are told of a tragedy of Euripides, in which the apparatus was so dreadful as to throw children into fits, and make women miscarry; but it is most probable that the subsequent performances were not much crowded by the Athenian ladies.

Of the "Orphan," the less that is said the better, for two such unprincipled rascals as Castalio and Polydore, can excite no feeling except that of disgust. The assertion of our Critic, that the mistake of one brother for another by Monimia, is "far the most natural of any of the *self-same* kind that has "yet been invented by Shakspeare, or any other dramatist," we do not understand: we do not recollect any mistake of the *self-same* kind in any other play. A minute investigation of the probability of this would hardly be consistent with strict decorum.

Mrs. Inchbald says of Venice Preserved, that it is "the favourite work of Otway, and is played repeatedly "every year, except when an order from the Lord Chamber- "lain forbids its representation, lest some of the speeches of "Pierre should be applied by the ignorant part of the audi- "ence to certain men or assemblies in the English state."

It is an observation of Aristotle, that before an author is blamed for an immoral sentiment, the occasion of it and the character of the person who delivers it should be considered. The same reason is equally applicable to a popular sentiment. It surely can be no credit to any cause to applaud sentiments of

reform, from the mouth of a man whose avowed end is the ruin of his country, and the means fire and assassination.

Who, that has any sense of propriety of character, can read this passage with patience: "The high sounding vengeance of "Zanga charms every heart, while the malicious purposes of "Iago fill every bosom with abhorrence?" Iago's means of vengeance are consonant with his character, those of Zanga perfectly inconsistent with what the poet meant for his character; but shew the despicable villain that merited the blow he received. The ridiculous line intended as a parody, in Chronononhotonthologos,

> "And Bombardinian has receiv'd a blow,"

in point of absurdity and bombast, sinks to nothing before its archetype,

> "Great Alexander 'midst his conquests mourn'd,
> "Heroes and demigods have known their sorrows!
> "Cæsars have wept, and *I* have had *my* blow."

Of the "Mourning Bride," or the criticism on it, there is little to say. The first attempt at tragedy, by the first comic writer of the age, was naturally a subject of much curiosity, and consequently drew, as Mrs. Inchbald says, "all the wits and "critics to the representation;" and she adds, "the great Dryden "was present, and is said to have been enraptured." We have heard from good authority, the mode in which he expressed his rapture. He went with a hope of seeing a formidable dramatic rival fail in this yet untried species of composition; but the moment he had heard the opening of the play, he jumped up and exclaimed, 'D--- this fellow, he will ruin us all.'

Every dramatic critic will agree in the charge of insipidity brought against "Tancred and Sigismunda;" but the observation of its revival to introduce young Betty, is not altogether so just. When Mrs. Inchbald says, "The taste which is irre-

"gular, will combine irregularities; and why should not exqui-
"site verses be taken for a play, while an exquisite little boy
"is received as an actor?" We cannot assent to her proposition. That young Betty was so young as to be on that account totally unfit for many of the parts he performed, is obvious; never was any exhibition more ridiculously absurd than his grappling with and overpowering the largest actor on the stage,—Corry in Octavian. But the words *little boy* convey the idea of a child; and as for the exquisite verses, surely never was language more harsh and turgid than that of Tancred and Sigismunda.

Speaking of the Suspicious Husband, Mrs. Inchbald's usual discrimination surely forsook her, when she remarked that, "of all the *jealous* husbands on the stage, from the an-
"cient Kitely and Ford, down to the modern Sir John Restless,
"Strickland is the most tame and unimportant." Strickland is not a *jealous* but a *suspicious* husband. Jea ousy originates from the unreasonable and misguided effusions of violent love, but the suspicion of Strickland arises from an envious and morose temper, without the smallest spark of affection; "the Suspicious Wife," would have been a more appropriate appellation for Colman's excellent comedy than, "the Jealous Wife."

This criticism on the Tragedy of the Gamester is new, but strikes us as perfectly just:—"As the author meant his Game-
"ster to be an object of pity, not of detestation, (and in ge-
"neral his design has been fulfilled,) it appears that he has
"pleaded an apology for the vice, rather than set all hearts
"against it. Ridicule had been the best means by which to
"have accomplished its extirpation."

The Tragedy of Barbarossa (which by the way is exactly the story of Merope with different names) is no longer interesting, but as being the drama in which Master Betty made his first appearance on a London Stage. This is Mrs. Inch-

bald's observation on the merits of this young actor, and the effect of his first performance:

"To argue the question upon matter of fact, rather than on the "disputed claims of correct taste--which every party conceive "they possess—these are the facts. A great majority of the au- "dience thought young Betty a complete Tragedian, yet he fail- "ed in that power over their hearts which ought to have ended "the argument in demonstration. Bursts of laughter were ex- "cited from the audience, in divers parts of this Tragedy—on his "first appearance, which could not have occurred from any ad- "ventitious or ludicrous event whatever, had the minds of the "auditors been once enwrapt, and not left vacant for the quick "reception of every tract of ridicule."

The Reviewer was present at this representation. In his opinion, the majority of the audience neither thought, nor were capable of thinking, whether young Betty was or was not a complete Tragedian. They were told they were to see a prodigy of excellence, and they came predetermined both to wonder and to praise. Bursts of applause he heard, but none of laughter. Let Betty's merit have been of the most transcendent kind, it could excite no interest, from his disproportion to the other actors. This was particularly observable in his scenes with Irene, for which reason Douglas should have been chosen for his début. It is more strikingly out of character for a boy to make love to a woman than to kill a giant; besides, the heroic deeds of Douglas are performed behind the scenes.

Mrs. Inchbald's remark on the "Grecian Daughter," recalls to the Reviewer an anecdote he had from the author. The fair critic observes, that in this play the "men's cha- "racters have been all sacrificed to the valour of the woman; "he has made his female do the deed of a man, and his best "man perform the act of a child." Mr. Murphy told the Reviewer, who once ventured to state the same objection to him, that at the first rehearsal there was a warm contest between Mr. and Mrs. Barry for the honour of stabbing Dionysius, which, as is natural, terminated in favour of the Lady.

Mrs. Inchbald says, that "the short and seemingly inferior "part of Glenalvon in Douglas, is rendered a conspicuous "character on the stage by the skilful acting of Cooke." The first, second and third acts are each concluded by a soliloquy, in which Glenalvon details his own villainous character to the audience.—Of Cooke's excellence in the part, there can be but one opinion.

Of Bickerstaff's two Comic Operas, Love in a Village, and the Maid of the Mill, our critic speaks with becoming candour, and allows them the dramatic merit they possess, much beyond what is any where else to be found in the same species of Drama. As the last is not in the least inferior in merit to the first, there seems no good reason why Love in a Village should still keep its place entire on the stage, and the Maid of the Mill be reduced to an after-piece. Voltaire has ventured, even during the height of French aristocracy, to introduce the same circumstance that forms the catastrophe of the Maid of the Mill on the Paris stage, in his favourite Opera of Nina. Though there can be no possible competition between the general poetical excellence of Voltaire and Bickerstaff; yet in one instance the English dramatist has done better than the French one. Both thought it necessary to shew that, though such unequal marriages might occasionally from the high merit and accomplishments of the women be justified, they should not be considered as examples to be frequently followed. Of this, the mother-in-law of Nina, though she consents to the union, comes forward and tells the audience in express terms. But Sir Harry Sycamore does it much better in the English Opera, when he tells Lord Aimworth, that 'he knew a gentleman, a relation of his own, 'who married his cook-maid, who was a very good sort 'of a woman, and made the best suet dumplings he ever 'tasted.'

To the Comedies of Mr. Cumberland Mrs. Inchbald allows the praise they deserve. The following remarks, whether

applied to comedy in general, or to the particular one (the West-Indian) to which they more immediately relate, are so judicious that there can be no reader of our Review, but will be pleased with their insertion.

"To give blunt repartee or other humorous dialogue to characters in low life; to produce variety of comic accidents by which a petty tradesman, a sailor, or a country clown, shall raise a peal of laughter, is the easy attainment of every whimsical writer: but to exhibit the weak side of wisdom, the occasional foibles which impede the full exertion of good sense; the chance-awkwardness of the elegant, and mistakes of the correct; to bestow wit on beauty, and to depict the passions visible in the young as well as the aged;—herein is the difficulty which divides like a gulf the superior from the inferior dramatist.—These are efforts of intellect required in the production of a good comedy, and can alone confer the title of a good comic author."

Why Mrs. Inchbald chuses to say on "the Wheel of Fortune," that Mr. Cumberland is indebted to the German original of 'the Stranger,' "for even a glimmering of plot, incident, and character," contrary to the assertion of the author, it is not easy to determine. Is it necessary that a character and incidents, derived from the fickleness of an honourable mistress, must be a copy of those derived from the infamy of an adultress? We trust that in a future edition this passage, so indecorous from the pen of a Lady, will be omitted: "The Stranger in one *high* instance is pre-eminent to the Wheel of Fortune:—the female character is there of infinite importance. But want of taste is not the fault of Mr. Cumberland for diminishing the pathos of his heroine;—his feeling and delicacy would not permit her fall from virtue." Does Mrs. Inchbald mean really to say that the heroine of a comedy cannot be sufficiently interesting, unless she is a strumpet? If it be so, the Reviewer has to apologize to Mr. Walter Scott for questioning his preference* of Beaumont and Fletcher to Shakspeare in the delineation of female characters, for in this species of excellence they are *facile principes*.

* See page 44. vol. I.

What business the Tragedy of the Earl of Warwick, which has not been acted for many years, except for the purpose of exhibiting Master Betty in a character singularly unfit for him, can have in the collection, we cannot imagine. Surely it could not be for the purpose of shewing how completely Mrs. Inchbald must have forgotten her Shakspeare when she says, "In this tragedy the youthful, gay, and gallant Edward the "Fourth is for the *first* and *last* time brought upon the stage "in person."

That the Rivals is a Comedy much inferior to the School for Scanda every critic, it is presumed, must agree with Mrs. Inchbald: but surely

"*Her zeal for Cato carried her too far*,"

when she called the latter "the best dramatic composition since Shakspeare wrote."

This is however exceeded by the hyperbolical rant that begins the remarks on the Duenna. "This drama," the fascinated critic says, "has a charm for the public beyond its "own intrinsic worth—it was written by Richard Brinsley "Sheridan. If that name has no power over the reader's "imagination, so as to give every sentence a degree of inter-"est, let him throw aside the book and forbear to seek after "literary pleasures, for he has not the taste to enjoy them." Why, this is out-heroding Herod! it is putting Sheridan far above Shakspeare, for Mrs. Inchbald has shewn that the name of Shakspeare gives no such degree of interest to her. But to a dramatist, a living manager is more worth flattering than a dead poet.

What can Mrs. Inchbald mean by this observation in the conclusion of her remarks on the Mountaineers? "It is "said that some part of this play is taken from Cervantes." Is the taste of our fair critic of too delicate a nature to permit her to read Don Quixote? Yet if she had read that celebrated work, she might have been able to judge herself, without

trusting to the sayings of others, whether or not the fable of the Moutaineers is founded on the Episode of Cardenio.

As an introduction to the remarks on the Heir at Law, Mrs. Inchbald has obliged the public with two letters which pass d between herself and Mr. Colman, relative to her criticisms on Inkle and Yarico. Suffice it to say of this correspondence, that it seems a contest between the two dramatists, which could convey the most ill-bred sentiments, in the most well-bred language. On the same principle, Mrs. Inchbald tries to veil under affected panegyric, all the censure which without entirely discrediting her own judgment she could bestow on that inimitable comedy, the Heir at Law.

The twenty-third volume is filled by five of Mrs. Inchbald's Comedies, the remarks on which present a circumstance I believe totally unparalleled in the annals of criticism.—It is not uncommon to find an author resisting the censure of criticism, or apologizing for, or trying to palliate faults which cannot be denied; but Mrs. Inchbald stands forth and boldly blames her own works with something like the asperity of a Reviewer. It will be the pleasing duty of the present Reviewer, occasionally to interpose between her criticism and her dramas, and to shew that though many of her observations are excellent, they sometimes press with too much severity against herself.

Of her Comedy, Such things are, she says "there was "novelty, locality, and invention in it, and the audience for- "gave, or in their warmth of approbation overlooked, impro- "bability in certain events, incorrectness of language, and "meanness bordering on vulgarity in some of the characters." Would not this from the pen of any other critic, and without any proofs to support it, have been deemed an invidious attempt to depreciate a drama, where merit was universally acknowledged? Mrs. Inchbald is equally severe, and with as little ground, on that very interesting comedy, Wives as they Were. Her observations on To Marry or not to Marry,

require more investigation : we make these extracts from them: " It appears as if the writer of this play had said, " previous *(previously)* to the commencement of the task, " ' I will shun the faults imputed by the critics to modern " ' dramatists, I will avoid farcical incidents, broad jests, " ' the introduction of broken English, whether provincial or " ' Hibernian. Vain is the forecast of both man and woman ! " ' What is the event of her cautious plan ? Has she produ- " ' ced a good comedy ? No : she has passed from one ex- " ' treme to another ; and in attempting to soar above others, " ' she has fallen beneath herself.' " Can Mrs. Inchbald be surprized at this, after saying that " various personages of the " drama, however disunited, amuse the looker-on ; while one " little compact family presents a sameness to the view, like " unity of place, and wearies the sight of a British audience " fully as much." Could she look at the Dramatis Personæ, and suppose the play would be popular ? Or when she allows also, that " incidents must be numerous, however unconnected, " to please a London audience, who seem, of late, to expect " a certain number, whether good or bad," how could she hope that simplicity, which is the avowed characteristic of the play, could ever make it a favourite with the public ? Mrs. Inchbald pays too high a compliment, even to the most exalted genius, to suppose it possibly capable of " giving to a " play of simple construction, all those attractive powers " which every complex drama is sure to produce."

To the comedies of Mr. Holcroft our authoress seems very partial: this remark on the ' Road to Ruin,' seems as singular a piece of dramatic panegyric, as ever was written: "The " scenes between Dornton and his son, are not like scenes in " a play, but like occurrences in the house of a respectable " banker, who has a dissipated though a loving and beloved " son." We have always considered the merit of imitation of every kind, but especially of dramatic imitation, to draw incidents and situation, which, without going beyond the

bounds of probability, shall produce stronger interest than is usually found in the events of real life.

After what has been said on Mr. Cumberland's Wheel of Fortune, Mrs. Inchbald's eulogium on the Stranger is not wonderful: though when she chose so strongly to advocate the cause of an adultress, it is to be lamented, that she introduced so sacred an authority.

Heaven may forgive a crime to penitence,
Because Heaven knows if penitence is true.

But the dramatic poet is bound to respect the opinions of mankind. In the eye of popular opinion, the character of a woman is degraded by want of chastity, as that of a man is by want of courage; and he would be a bold writer who should venture to draw a coward as an object of respect.

The remark on the catastrophe (which is certainly highly affecting) is very curious, as suggesting a doubt, whether the concluding embrace was really cordial, or that the endearment was only transient, to be followed by perpetual remembrance of former injury. Such an enquiry would destroy all the pleasure we feel, from every play that has a happy catastrophe, and is equally applicable to the interesting reconciliation of Lord and Lady Townly.

It is difficult to conceive on what principle De Montfort could be introduced among a collection of plays "which *are* acted at the London Theatres," since it was only brought forward to gratify one actor, was very coldly received, and acted for a very few nights. We acknowledge the merit of Miss Baillie as a poet, but her poems, though dramatic, are not calculated to please in representation: neither, while we doubt of the consistency of inserting the tragedy in this collection, can we censure a circumstance that has given occasion for so much excellent dramatic criticism. Great truth, mixed with perhaps a little too strong a tincture of compliment, will be found in this passage: "Theory and practice are very dif-

"ferent things, and perhaps so distinct is the art of criticism "from the art of producing good plays, that no one critic so "good as herself, has ever written a play half so good as De "Montfort." Without saying any thing of the high panegyric at the conclusion, the whole history of the Drama confirms the general observation. What Mrs. Inchbald says of the hatred of De Montfort, being carried to such an excess as to border on constitutional mania, is perfectly just, and such a character is not proper for the drama. A man like Lear, driven into frenzy by events within the course of drama, excites pity and terror in the highest degree; but "rooted antipathy with-"out ome more considerable provocation than is here ad-"duced, is too like the first unhappy token of insanity," to be a proper object of dramatic imitation.

The last play in this collection, is Mr. Tobin's Honey Moon. After much merited praise on this very pleasing drama, and an interesting account of the author who did not live to witness its success, our fair critic says that "it is al-"ledged, that the author, with all his talents, was deficient "of invention, and therefore he reminds his auditors too "frequently of the plots and incidents of other plays." This, it must be confessed, is true; but when it is allowed, that "it "must also be confessed, that his choice of examples has been "directed by taste and judgment;" and that his imitations are of such poets as Shakspeare, or Beaumont and Fletcher, surely, if their merit has not suffered in the imitation, Mr. Tobin is entitled to no mean praise. Virgil will always rank with the first of poets, notwithstanding his obligations to Homer, to Hesiod, and to Theocritus.

The reader will perceive, that our criticism has not been extended to all the plays in this voluminous collection. As the remarks of Mrs. Inchbald, and not the plays themselves, were the objects of enquiry, such plays only are noticed as were prefaced by remarks that claimed particular attention, though in doing this, it was impossible to avoid some critical observations on

the dramas that were the object of these remarks. So many extracts have been laid before the reader, accompanied with observations on them as they occurred, that it may seem superfluous to add any general character of the work: suffice it to say, that most of the notes do credit to the taste and feeling of the amiable critic, and that the chief fault we have to find, is rather a too frequent affectation of singularity of opinion. There is perhaps no part of a critic's duty so difficult, as the steering carefully between the two extremes of too blind a deference to the authority of received opinion, or too wanton a deviation from it.

Shall the Reviewer be pardoned for wandering a little from his avowed object, just to mention a circumstance that struck him in the course of this review? As the manners of the age are no where so faithfully exhibited as on the stage, and as these plays are nearly given in chronological order, they afford a striking picture of the wonderful preponderance that the commercial interest has acquired within little more than half a century. The fine gentlemen, the Mirabells and even the Charles Oakleys of the stage, were men of family and landed fortune, and love and gallantry furnished both the distress and the fortunate catastrophe of the piece. At present, both the man of virtue and the man of intrigue are taken from the country-house; the distress and the difficulties, in the four first acts, originate from a ruined fortune; and in the fifth, the god of wealth appears to solve the *dignus vindice nodus*, in the shape of an unexpected will, or the arrival of a rich relation from abroad.

LATIN AND ITALIAN POEMS OF MILTON, TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE, AND A FRAGMENT OF A COMMENTARY ON *PARADISE LOST*. BY THE LATE WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ. WITH A PREFACE, BY THE EDITOR, W. HAYLEY, ESQ. AND NOTES OF VARIOUS AUTHORS. *For J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-yard, and R. H. Evans, Pall-Mall, London*, 1808.

THE Editor of this volume having generously bestowed upon an orphan god-child of his deceased friend Mr. Cowper, whatever profits the sale of it may produce, has sent it into the world accompanied by the good wishes of every candid reader for its success, and as such, I sincerely hope his liberal motives have received, and will continue to receive, their merited gratification and reward.

Mr. Cowper, whose admirable translation of Homer will continue to rise in the estimation of all true judges, has certainly given proof of his very high respect for the author of *Paradise Lost* by condescending to employ his time and talents on a version of these minor poems, in which, if he discovered any very brilliant dawnings of that mighty mind, that afterwards broke forth with so much splendour, I must own they are lost upon me. I trust I know how I ought to appreciate the judgment of Mr. Cowper, and that also of his learned Editor, but I cannot think with the former that the *Epitaphium Damonis* is "a pastoral equal to any of Virgil's "Bucolics." (*Pref.* p. 13.)

That Samuel Johnson spoke contemptuously of this Elegy is not matter of such surprise to me, as that Mr. Cowper should so overrate it; for if I am not very grossly mistaken, the young acamedic, taking Ovid rather than Virgil for his model, has overcharged these Elegies with a puerile exuberance

of ancient fable, and a troop of gods and goddesses, out of place, and out of nature.

As to Mr. Cowper's version of these Latin Elegies, and the fragment of his intended Commentary on *Paradise Lost*, with whatever else Mr. Hayley has given us of his remains, I am of opinion they will be found rather to evince the modest and ingenuous character of the man, than to add any thing to the fame of the poet; the measure of which was already full. I shall not therefore call the reader's attention to any review of them: the translations are well done, and very probably the better for Mr. Hayley's share in the revisal of them.

The sample of the Commentary on *Paradise Lost* is too mere a fragment to pronounce upon, but from the progress he had made in his notes upon part of the third book, it seems out of doubt that he meant to enter on a resolute defence of that conduct, which so many have disapproved of, and which suggested to Pope that sarcastic line—

And God the Father turns a school divine.

A line, says Mr. Cowper, *which for the flippancy of it, considering whom it censures, it might be wished that he had never written.*

He further says—"The doctrines here agitated, and in the "other speeches, which Milton ascribes to the two first Persons in "the Trinity, (as Mr. Addison well observes) naturally grow up "in a poem on the fall of man, and Mr. Pope must have been very "little acquainted with the school-men, to have asserted that in "Milton's manner of handling those doctrines there is any thing "that resembles their's."

Upon this I have simply to observe, that although Milton certainly gives language and argument to the aweful character, which he aspires to introduce, far above what Mr. Pope compares them to, yet if in tracing his sublime subject up to heaven, he found himself warranted or compelled to furnish word for the Supreme Being, other than those, which have the

authority and sanctification of Holy Writ, it behoved him, as I humbly conceive, to have introduced that Supreme Being, whose thoughts surpass man's comprehension, not in the act of reasoning, debating and haranguing, but simply and strictly as delivering out his Almighty mandates in his character, by which we, his creatures, address him, of the Ruler and Creator of the universe.

Let the genius of man be what it may, he has no right to attempt what he has no power to perform.

On the part of Mr. Hayley we have a dedication, a preface and some notes on the aforesaid minor poems, undersigned with the letter H. In his preface, (p. 19,) he says that a friend of Mr. Cowper sent him "a copy of Bentley's Milton, containing many very severe censures, in manuscript, against the "presumptuous Editor.—These smothered embers of ancient "animosity he was far from wishing to rekindle—and thought "it most worthy of a scholar and a Christian, rather to suppress "the hasty occasional virulence even of angry wit, than to "give it new circulation."

Such being the mild conciliatory disposition of Mr. Cowper, he would hardly have given new circulation to the *angry wit* of Mr. Pope, but on the contrary perhaps have noted it with his disapprobation in the case of Bentley, as he did in that of Milton. Mr. Hayley in the mean time, not influenced by the like disposition, in the very next page save one, (v. p. 21.) turns a little out of his way to pick up and point this flippant anecdote against Bentley, who, he says, "had the temerity to "insult Pope in conversation, by calling his Homer *a pretty* "*poem;* and the insult was so powerfully avenged, that its "punishment can never be forgotten."

This is not quite in Mr. Cowper's spirit; however if the punishment can never be forgotten, there is no harm in Mr. Hayley's remembring it, nor any great good in his recording it. If the temerity and insult consisted in Doctor Bentley's not giving the title of Translation to the Homer of Mr. Pope,

I should doubt if he is single in that offence. How far Mr. Cowper coincided in opinion with Doctor Bentley as to the point in question, will appear in the following passage, extaracted from his Preface to the first edition of his own translation—*viz.*—"He (Mr. Pope) has given the *Tale of Troy divine*, in smooth verse, generally in correct and elegant language, and in diction often highly poetical; but *his deviations are so many*, occasioned chiefly by the cause already mentioned, that, much as he has done, and valuable as his work is on some accounts, it was yet in the humble province of a translator that I thought it possible even for me to follow him with some advantage. That he has sometimes *altogether suppressed the sense of his author*, and has not seldom *intermingled his own ideas with it*, is a remark, which on this occasion nothing but necessity should have extorted from me: but we differ sometimes so widely in our matter, that unless this remark, invidious as it seems, be premised, I know not how to obviate a suspicion on the one hand, of careless oversight, or of factitious embellishment on the other. On this head therefore the English reader is to be admonished, that the matter found in me, whether he like it or not, is found also in Homer, and that the matter not found in me, how much soever he may admire it, *is found only in Mr. Pope.* I have omitted nothing; I have invented nothing."

If these defects in Mr. Pope's translation of Homer, discovered and above-described by Mr. Cowper, were not overlooked by Doctor Bentley, I presume I might leave this charge of *temerity* and *insult* without any further appeal; but as Mr. Hayley, when he asserts that Doctor Bentley *had the temerity to insult Pope in conversation*, may be understood to mean *in company with Mr. Pope*, it behoves to say, that was not the case.—The very utmost that can be inferred from the anecdote is, that he would not give the name of a translation to the Homer of Mr. Pope, but saw it in the same light with

Mr. Cowper as to that particular; and this I trust reflects no discredit upon either party: the one by implication spoke his thoughts, the other published them.

I now look back to what Mr. Hayley adduces in his preceding page, as the testimony of a friend and scholar; for whose person and opinions I have the most sincere respect. It is simply this—(*Pref.* p. 20,)—"When Bentley's unfortunate Milton first appeared, it was received (says Mr. Todd) *with disgust and derision.*" These words in Italics are certainly to be found in the Preface of my friend, (p. 2.) yet I must observe, that in the manner Mr. Hayley has thought fit and for his purpose to introduce and apply them, they are most unfairly quoted.—Mr. Todd's words are as follows:—"In 1732 Doctor Bentley published a splendid edition of the *Paradise Lost*, by which he acquired no honour: his specious pretences of an interpolated text, and his arbitrary method of emendation, were received with *derision and disgust;* yet there are some notes in the edition, which bespeak the unvitiated taste of this eminent scholar, and to which the classical reader will always thankfully subscribe."

I must think it hard upon Mr. Todd, and not quite fair in Mr. Hayley towards Doctor Bentley, that out of a passage, where liberal praise is so much mixed with seemingly reluctant blame, as to give it the preponderance, only two words could be found for a gentleman and a scholar to make use of for the purpose of degrading the illustrious dead; and those two words, which by Mr. Todd are pointed only at a part of the general work, so quoted, as to bear against the whole. This manner of culling bitter out of sweet, evil out of good, is surely out of place in a work, professing motives of benevolence, and recommending to posterity the pious memory of a departed friend, the mild and gentle poet of Weston, "whose "pure mind—(I quote Mr. Hayley's words)— was a stranger "in its own feelings to the common animosities of the world,

"and, on all occasions, evangelically disposed to promote "peace and good will among men." Let these feelings, which were in Cowper, be also in Mr. Hayley, and I hope he will live to the age of Doctor Bentley, and, like him, retain his faculties in full possession to his dying-day.

LECTURES ON THE TRULY EMINENT ENGLISH POETS. BY PERCIVAL STOCKDALE. 2 *Vols.* 8*vo.* *about* 600 *pages each.* *Longman and Co.* 1807, 1808.

THERE are few spectacles at once so ridiculous and deplorable, as that of an unsuccessful author abusing the insensibility of his contemporaries, and boldly claiming the wonder and admiration of a period more liberal and enlightened. The abilities of such a writer are generally in an inverse ratio to his vanity, and the more undeserving he is of every literary distinction, the prouder are his boasts and the loftier his pretensions. His youth is wasted in dreaming of the honours that await his age, and his age in anticipating the reverence which shall be paid to his memory.

Such is the situation of the writer whom it is our present duty to review. Without the correctness of a scholar, the taste of a critic, or the abilities of a poet, there is scarcely any species of composition in which he does not suppose himself to excel, and for which he has not displayed his utter incapacity. Yet after more than forty years of mortification and disappointment; after seeing the dearest pledges of his literary labour glide successively to slumber and forgetfulness, and outliving every friend whose forbearance or partiality might delude him into a false estimate of his own powers; he still continues, unwearied and undismayed, to

poise his sentences, and modulate his stanzas, with all the ardour of youth, and all the confidence of a successful veteran.

Though every line of his book contains some encomium on his own sensibility, and reverence for truth; though every page is crouded with exclamations of tenderness, admiration, generosity, and candour; though the injuries of Gray excite him almost to madness, and the multiplied transgressions against the inviolable sanctity of Milton, affect him with a grief and horror that almost overpower his reason, and paralyze his faculties; yet there are some occasions on which his ardour for truth, and his indignation at posthumous calumny, give place to less worthy and amiable passions. When he mentions the name of Johnson, all his former considerations of justice or prudence are overpowered by the frenzy of personal resentment. Every charge against his character and his writings, that from its importance has been considered as worthy of satisfactory refutation, or neglected on account of its absurdity, is collected, and commented upon with a minuteness and a vehemence, that lead us at once to pity the blindness of his anger, and to detest the inveteracy of his revenge. In one respect, however, he has been of considerable service to the cause of literature: he has brought into a tangible shape, all the flying innuendos and unconnected charges which have been circulated for the last fifty years, in a mass of heterogeneous publications. He has enabled the Critic to examine and refute within a reasonable compass, the collective accusations of the Sewards, the Campbells, and the Mudfords. To this cause, and to this alone, is Mr. Stockdale indebted for our present observations—it is only as the vehicle of calumny and slander, that we have selected him as worthy of serious castigation; as the chymist crushes the spider, or dissects the wasp, not that he may destroy the insect, but that he may analyse its poison.

The great object of the book secondary, if not paramount to that of depreciating the moral and literary character o

Johnson, is to prove that Mr. Stockdale is fully competent to succeed him in the chair of criticism. His lectures are not designed to elucidate abstract truths, or to enforce the just principles of literary composition, but to prove that Johnson is a fool, and Stockdale a philosopher. In the few chapters in which he has not compared the Doctor with himself, he delivers only such sentiments as are too obvious to be disputed, and too common-place to excite any other wonder than that a writer should be found so dull, or so ignorant as to repeat them. It is only, therefore, as his opinions clash with those of Johnson, that they are the proper objects of our present examination; and we are not sorry that Mr. Stockdale's vanity and irritability have supplied us with an opportunity that we had vainly expected from the honesty or candour of the Doctor's former adversaries.

If Mr. Stockdale himself may be believed, there is no qualification of the critic, the poet, or the scholar, that he does not possess in a supereminent degree. A reader who should overlook the title-page, would suppose his lectures to be the last and worst production of some literary veteran, flushed with the remembrance of his early triumphs, and delivering his sentiments with the freedom and confidence of acknowledged superiority. Even his apologies for his own inadequacy to the subjects that he treats, his deprecations of critical severity, his professions of diffidence in himself, and deference to the public, display more of the simpering self-sufficiency of a man who knows that he is soliciting what he might justly demand, than of the real and unaffected modesty of an author doubtful of his own powers, and embarrassed by the novelty of his situation.

"I have exerted (says he) my energy of thinking, my critical "penetration and enquiries, &c. &c. with that free and independent "spirit which was due to the memory of that illustrious and "glorious youth" (Chatterton; preface, p. 9.) Again, "I "here openly and honestly declare, that I am not a little ambi-"tious of a literary immortality; and it would gratify me extreme-

"ly to feel the rays of its orient lustre warm and animate my "languid frame, before it descends to the tomb." Preface, page 10.

These passages will, no doubt, be sufficient to gratify the curiosity of the generality of readers; but if any one be anxious to contemplate the human mind in its lowest state of degradation, to sport with the ravings of egotistic frenzy, and to observe the deplorable effects of unbounded vanity in the perversion of every moral principle, and every discriminative faculty, we must refer him to the volumes themselves, which contain passages too indecently presumptuous to be quoted, and absurdities that no unconnected extracts would exemplify.

We have already expressed our opinion of Mr. Stockdale's former labours, and it is our present duty to enquire, whether his "Lectures on the truly eminent English Poets," display any indications of improvement. A writer who comes boldly forward as the avowed competitor of Johnson, must either atone for the temerity of the enterprise by its success, or consent to be distinguished as the most vain and foolish of mankind. He ought, at least, if he wishes that his production should excite even momentary notice, to display some knowledge of the subjects that he treats, and some acquaintance with the graces of polished composition. He should remember that he is exposing himself to comparison with a writer whose learning was extensive, accurate, and various; to whose acuteness of perception, nothing was so minute as to be invisible; to whose depth of penetration, no abstruseness could seem difficult, nor any perplexity entangled; whose style was so perspicuous as to elucidate the lowest subject, and so copious and splendid as to be equal to the highest.

If the reader can picture to himself a writer in every qualification of the critic and rhetorician, the direct reverse of Dr. Johnson, he will be able in some measure to estimate the merits of Mr. Stockdale. His violations of grammar and

common-sense, are so numerous and so flagrant, that it might almost be suspected that his volumes were merely intended to exemplify the principles and practice of bad writing.

On every subject but the literary character of Johnson, his opinions are at variance with themselves. Without comprehension of genius to embrace a system, or accuracy of discrimination to form a just estimate of what is immediately before him, his decisions are rather the effusions of vanity stimulated by resentment, or of imbecility bewildered in a labyrinth of heterogeneous prejudices, than the cool and consistent determinations of talent and impartiality. He hazards his assertions sometimes without perceiving the conclusions to which they will ultimately lead; and sometimes trusting that they will not be perceived by his readers. Scarcely a paragraph occurs, therefore, in one part of his work, which is not contradicted in another. It is when he speaks of Johnson alone, that he escapes the disgrace of self-contradiction. To be consistent in abuse, is easy; to perform the office of a critic requires something very different from scurrility of language and malignity of invention.

Speaking of Shakspeare, he says,

"His perspicuity will not by many readers be easily granted "me. I have no doubt, that in language and style, and indeed "in every other object, to his contemporaries he was always per- "spicuous. Some of his references will be for ever dark and dis- "putable, on account of his distance from our time. But when "in his *passages of moral terms*, or of allusions, the sources of "which are yet known; when in them there is any obscurity, I "am satisfied that it is *involved in the corruption of the text.*"—(Vol. I. p. 72.)

It might have been imagined from this paragraph, that Mr. Stockdale admitted the necessity of restoring the true reading of Shakspeare as far as it could be accomplished; yet, only four pages before, he assures us, that

"It is almost impossible, that so rich and fertile a mind (as "*that of Pope*) should submit to the drudgery of plodding through

"many cold and rugged authors, whose utmost merit, after all the "toil that has been bestowed upon them, consists in their tendency "to ascertain some words which are of very little consequence, "either to the reader or to him who wrote them."—(Vol. I. p. 78.)

And again,

"The interest, the permanence, or the increase of Shakspeare's "glory, does not at all depend on the relatively insignificant "purity, or *corruption of a few words or periods.*"—(Vol. I. p. 85.)

Of his talent for metaphysical disquisition, the following specimens are equally curious and entertaining. Page 48, he exclaims, "I shall the more clearly communicate what I "mean by this faculty (invention); if I endeavour with some "accuracy to distinguish it from imagination." *After such a preface*, who would not expect some profound disquisition concerning the operations of the human mind, and some logical enquiry into the precise meaning of the terms thus employed? It will be difficult, however, to discover in the succeeding sentences any marks of the accuracy that he professes. "The inventive poet signalizes himself by combining remoter "images. Such a writer is emphatically the ποιητης, the "poet, the maker, almost the creator." What person, unacquainted with Mr. Stockdale's preceding observations, would suspect this sentence to be meant for an accurate definition of invention?

The following extract affords an instance equally striking, of the pomposity with which he introduces trifling observations, and the importance which he attaches to remarks which another writer would have rejected as absurd, or despised as common-place:

"I will endeavour to exemplify what I have now advanced, by "an observation which I had intended to insert in another part of "this lecture, but which I think will take its place here with the "greatest propriety.—The careless stroke, the slight touch of a "true poet is not given in vain. '*To take the air and hear the*

" '*thrush's song*,' is a line in the Faerie Queene. By this single " verse of simple elegance the mind of a correspondent reader " (that is, we suppose, a *reader* of simple elegance) is not *weak-* " *ly affected:* because the verse is easy, and flowing; and be- " cause, in the idea of the pure zephyr, *(which is not mentioned)* " and of the melodious thrill of the thrush softly falling, *(which* " *Spenser has not described)* it announces the salubrious region " of innocence and peace. I flatter myself that these remarks ra- " ther illustrate, and enforce the simple beauty of the line. They " are not *very profoundly ingenious; as no poetical criticism* " *should be*, they are as perspicuous as the line itself to which they " are applied, and yet they may not occur to the mind of a sensible " reader, who has not been professionally habituated to give a close " attention to literary, and poetical objects." (Vol. I. p. 39, 40.)

Pythagoras could not have exulted more rapturously on the discovery of the 47th Proposition, or Mr. Ross declaimed with greater elegance and self-satisfaction on the merits of his transcendant perukes, than Mr. Stockdale on the enunciation of what he is pleased to denominate *the preceding theory*. But it is not in this respect alone that the paragraphs we have quoted are illustrative of Mr. Stockdale's peculiarities. The pliability with which he converts " taking the " air," into *breathing the zephyr*, and " the thrush's song," into a *softly falling thrill*, the simple naiveté with which he disclaims all pretensions to profundity, or ingenuity, at the very moment that he is boasting of those very qualities, and the sententious brevity with which he at once bids defiance to the authority of every former critic, and controverts the concurring opinions of his contemporaries; are all so peculiarly characteristic of Mr. Stockdale's manner, and spirit, that we know not any other critic with whose productions they would assimilate.

Notwithstanding his lectures are professedly designed to elucidate the principles of poetical composition, he expresses on all occasions an ineffable contempt for the art of criticism. He is one of those favoured beings who are able to determine the merits of a poem by intuition, and to form a perfect estimate of its plot, its diction, and its imagery, without the small-

est assistance from the enquiries of others, or the slightest exercise of their own faculties. "Let a poet (says he) be enthu-
"siastic; if his critic is worthy of him, he will be enthusiastic
"too. . . . Peace to these dry metaphysical critics; they
"never yet gave any information to one disciple, they never
"yet illustrated one fine author."

If this *critical theory* (as he calls it, for with him every assertion is a theory, and every exclamation a discovery,) be true, of what use are Mr. Stockdale's Lectures? There is no occasion for his critical instructions, for every reader is able to feel without them, and feeling, he assures us, is infallible. The utility of his writings can only depend on the value of the principles that they enforce, or elucidate; or to speak more precisely, on their resemblance to those very essays for which he has condemned the metaphysical authors to oblivion. The relative merit of true poets cannot be estimated but by comparison, and comparison implies the exercise of the metaphysical powers. It is true that a man may judge correctly of a poem without being conscious while he feels its beauties, or is disgusted with its faults, that he has exerted any faculty of the mind; but this want of consciousness, is the natural consequence of that facility of combining the ideas and that habitual familiarity with mental exertion which is derived from previous study of the principles of criticism.

Were therefore the omnipotence of enthusiasm to be once admitted, it would be difficult to explain why one poet should have pre-eminence over another, or why a Grub-Street ballad should not elevate its author to as high a degree of immortality, as an epic poem. The war-song of an Indian chief excites an enthusiasm, which it would be vain to expect from the most animated recitation of the Odes of Pindar, or the Elegies of Tyrtæus. Kien Long's address to Tea is repeated by a Chinese peasant as a perfect example of poetical beauty. The Oxford Tragedy (to use the language of

Mr. S.) has excited tears more frequent, and sincere than ever embalmed the "*afflicting memory*" of Werter, or bedewed the "*solitary, the awe-inspiring*" tomb of the lovely Juliet. A Greenlander will breathe out his amorous emotions in strains at which even Mr. Stockdale would feel no other sensations than nausea, and disgust. *Taste* is not an abstract, and independent quality of the mind, but a combination of all those metaphysical powers which Mr. Stockdale has declared to be useless to the critic. It would not be inconsistent with his usual style of reasoning and self-contradiction, if he arrived at this conclusion by some logical deduction such as this: "I am an excellent critic, but I do not possess judgment, acuteness, or discrimination; therefore an excellent critic has no occasion for those qualities."

The great artifice of his style is repetition. He supposes that to render a sentence or a word emphatical, it is only necessary to repeat it. All his combinations of sentences are formed by interjections, or prepositions.

"An old mansion (says he) built in the days of the first Charles, "or James; in a sheltered, and tranquil situation; Druidically "embossed in wood, *with* all its elaborate, though unwieldy con- "veniences, and ornaments; *with* all its characteristics, and ap- "pendages of antient taste; *with* the sacred stream of its tutelary "Naiads; *with* the cawing of its rooks; though it may be harsh, "and discordant; *to* false delicacy, *to* modern ears; such a man- "sion would be the chosen seat of a person of true taste; of a man "endowed with a fine, active, and excursive imagination."

(Vol. I. p. 1.)

These passages have the appearance of having been pronounced by a consumptive orator, who was obliged to adapt the length of his sentences to the shortness of his respiration.—Again:

"This body of the muse of Spenser, this ancient and large Go- "thic fabric, if you will allow me the expression, operates * in a "region yet nobler than that of criticism, to minds congenial with

* *Qu.* What is the operation of a fabric?

"poetry, it gives us personified lectures of morality; it excites and "fires our best ambition; before the general resurrection; before "the dread sound of the last trumpet; &c. &c. (Vol. I. p. 9.)

This is evidently the manner of a writer who possesses neither vigour of thought, nor facility of expression. He first lashes himself into a fury, and then mistakes the ebullitions of rage, for the workings of inspiration. He stamps, and frets, and fumes, and blusters, and looks big; but his anger is without dignity, and his vehemence without animation. Sometimes indeed he simpers, and fawns, and gambols; but we like him as little when he endeavours to play the courtier, as when he acts the bully.

Of his precision of language, and accuracy of construction, it will be unnecessary to give any other examples than the following; which we believe to be perfectly unique:

"I have *exerted* my energy of thinking; my critical penetration, "and enquiries; *my eulogy*, and *my censure*, whatever they are "on the writings and fate of the unfortunate Chatterton, &c."
(Preface, p. 9.)

"Great personages, and very respectable persons, are in the "train of our poet—the eloquent, and elegant Rowe—his masterly "dramatic knowledge—the delicate, the animated, the divine soul of "Pope; have been employed, and exerted to repair his injuries, "and to do justice to his fame." (Vol. I. p. 46.)

To exerte ulogy, and censure, is an operation to which we have been totally unaccustomed; and still less have we ever laboured under any difficulty of determining whether doubt, is doubt, or censure, censure. In the second of these extracts we must confess our unwillingness to admire the beauty, or justice of the distinction between personages, and persons; and we are likewise at a loss to understand, whether the eloquent, and elegant Rowe, was employed, and exerted *to*, &c. &c. or his *masterly dramatic* knowledge was a *very respectable* person, a great personage, one of the poet's train, or any of these.

His epithets are in the highest degree glorious, and divine. The glorious youth, the divine poem, the divine soul, the ecstatic beauty, the thrilling verse, the transcendant genius, and many other expressions equally glittering, and splendid, sparkle through his volumes with a profusion that only renders their tinsel poverty more deplorably visible. He is afflicted with a species of nervous irritability, that sometimes deprives him of all power of thought, or recollection. This is more peculiarly the case when he speaks of those glorious, and divine poets, who alone are superior to himself. He is awed and intimidated—he is subdued—he trembles—he is agitated—he bows with awe, and admiration, he dare not look up, he ventures not gaze upon their glory, &c. while he contemplates the features of the mighty *masters of divine poetry.*

Some of these peculiarities are owing to the absurdity of his original plan of composition. Though many years have elapsed since he relinquished his intention of delivering these lectures in public, he has committed them to the press in the shape in which they were first written, deformed by egotisms, and repetitions, which nothing but the awkward situation of a lecturer could justify. "Permit me to recite to you (he "exclaims) some of the striking lines of this astonishing scene. "I am willing to suffer some mortification for the sake of Mil- "ton; I know how unequal I am to a proper repetition of his "verses; but they must be miserably recited indeed, if they do "not convince us that it was in his power, above all others, to "make his objects real, and present for the time."(Vol. I. p. 146.)

This apology for his recitation might be very prudent and appropriate in the lecture-room, but what is its beauty or utility in its present situation? His perpetual appeals to the good-nature, and attention of his audience are equally misplaced and fatiguing. Such exclamations as "permit me to "give you two quotations," "I am sure you will excuse me "for observing," "You will be pleased to recollect," "I wish "that what I have already said would induce you to attend,"

and "I entreat your most earnest and polite attention," have no other tendency than to render *confusion worse confounded;* to draw the attention more forcibly to his faults of tumour and affectation, and to cause all pity for his dullness, to be lost in our displeasure at his impertinence.

Such are the literary qualifications on which he founds his pretensions to the gratitude of an ignorant and deluded nation, whose prejudices he has undertaken to remove, and whose darkness he has condescended to illuminate.

Mr. Stockdale commences his first serious onset with the following "*eloquent* and *elegant*" exclamation: "What a "contrast are Addison's *charming* commentaries on the Para-"dise Lost, to the frequent absurdity, to the frequent asperity, "(I speak out, for the heroic virtue, the heroic poetry of Mil-"ton are at stake,) to the iniquity of Johnson."(Vol. I. p. 117.) This preference of Addison's observations to those of Johnson, is a sufficient proof how little Mr. Stockdale's taste, or impartiality, is to be trusted, on more doubtful and important subjects. It is now too late for him to come forward with his agonies of horror, and his ecstasies of admiration—the time is long since past in which the name of Milton would deprive a biographer of his reason or veracity; the world now talks of a poet as of another man, and the praise which he receives is more valuable and lasting, because it is more rational. A critic may at length be endured, though he does not believe every line of Shakspeare, or Homer, to be either *divine*, or *glorious;* though he should venture to deny that the sound is always an echo to the sense, and should suppose it possible that a great genius may sometimes produce an inharmonious line, or commit an unworthy action. Had the early biographers of our English Poets been less indiscriminate in their praise, and less partial in their narratives, the task of Dr. Johnson would have been more easy, and more popular. That spirit of blind and outrageous eulogy, which Mr. Stockdale so ardently admires, and which he has so laboriously

exemplified, has had no other influence than that of reducing our national Biography to a mere collection of epitaphs, which display every quality of poetry, but its powers of attraction.

Before the time of Johnson, the Biography of our own nation was little more than a repetition of compliments, and eulogies; every *verse-man* was divine, and every *prose-man* learned; his foibles were converted into virtues, and his greater iniquities either totally concealed, or partially represented. A reader who should judge of the general character of those literary worthies who flourished at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, by these undiscriminating praises would suppose them to have been exempted from every human failing, and to have possessed every god-like attribute. At that period the reputation of a wit was a sufficient apology for every extravagance of folly and licentiousness; and that indulgence which was granted to themselves by their contemporaries, the critics of the times were not unwilling to allow their predecessors. Literature was then the profession of a few; its members were personally and intimately acquainted with each other, and friendship and jealousy equally conspired to render their daily intercourse a scene of officious adulation and reciprocal compliment. A poet was praised by a friend, that he might prove his attachment, and by his rival, that he might display his generosity. The petty warfare of the inferior retainers of literature, had no other effect than to unite their superiors in closer coalition; to provoke their friends to more exaggerated praise, and to give a vain, or an ostentatious writer a plausible opportunity of mentioning himself. The press groaned beneath a perpetual load of complimentary epistles: commendatory stanzas were a necessary accompaniment of a poem that aspired at popularity; every statesman was a poet, and every country-gentleman who could give a good dinner, and write a congratulatory epistle, a man of letters.

Even after the gradations of literary rank had been more

impartially regulated, the same blindness of admiration for our established writers was equally observable. When criticism began to assume a manlier tone, the weight of its severity was chiefly felt by contemporary writers.

Walsh was still *learned*, and Granville *polite;* Prior was a model of gentlemanly ease, and graceful vivacity. Of more celebrated men, every error was a virtue, and every deformity a beauty. Lycidas was a model of tenderness and simplicity, and Smith's tragedy of *Phædra and Hypolitus* the noblest production of human genius.

Such was the state of English criticism and biography, when Johnson first commenced his literary career: and though in the course of a long life, he had, partly by his own exertions, and partly by the influence of his example, communicated to our criticism an energy and independence which it had not possessed before, and which has since too frequently degenerated into blind and indiscriminate scurrility; yet he still found in the decline of age, that much remained to be done towards exploding the collective fables, and absurdities of a century. He was well acquainted with the difficulties of the task that he had undertaken, and he knew that to execute it with ultimate honour to himself, or advantage to the public, it would be necessary to risk the temporary displeasure of the partial and the prejudiced. He was rather willing to incur, or even to deserve the censure of merciless and unrelenting severity, than to suffer the authority of a celebrated name to give lustre to dullness, or dignity to vice. It was he who first taught us to detect the fallacy of those sophisms, by which preceding biographers had been accustomed to palliate the moral transgressions, or defend the literary errors of heroes. To elicit the true character of a writer from his own representation of himself, or the encomiums of his friends, was a task, which, however invidious it might be, the acquiescence with which such delusive pictures had been received, had rendered necessary; and we ought not to be angry, though we have

some reason to be surprized that the portrait appears less faultless and brilliant when cleared of its varnish.

So much for the truth, or the propriety of Mr. Stockdale's assertion, that the "Lives of the Poets" came out at a time *very inauspicious to the fate of languishing literature; when manly knowledge and taste were not much cultivated amongst us.* If it be true, the criticisms of Johnson are the more to be admired for their spirit, and independence: if it be false (as we believe it to be), its falsehood only shews, that he reasons badly, from uncertain data.

We are next entertained with forty-five pages of declamation against the malignity of Johnson's censure, and the blindness of his taste. To support these charges, no other circumstance is adduced, than that his opinions are different from those of Mr. Stockdale. After attempting, by a long train of assertion and misrepresentation, to defend the sixth book of Paradise Lost, against the charge of "metaphysical incongruity," he is at last obliged to assert, that "physical and metaphysical accuracy are to be dispensed "with in poetry;" and immediately after confesses the folly of his admission, by exclaiming that, "very good judges are of "the same opinion with himself." To answer observations absurd in themselves, and so inconsistent with each other, would only be to imitate Mr. Stockdale in his trifling and prolixity.

That "Paradise Lost is one of the books which the reader admires, and lays down, and forgets to take up again," is a sentence of which the justice is too irresistibly and universally felt, to be censured as absurd, or reprobated as malicious, because a man like Mr. Stockdale chuses to deny it. The critic who ventures to call the readers of the Iliad stupid, indolent, and superficial, must surely forgive us if we value his admiration as little as his censure.

The soul of Johnson was not, like that of some writers whom we could name, vehemently moved with fixed horror and transport of agitation; and we cannot therefore be surprized,

that he sometimes had leisure to observe the defects of the authors whom he read, with more minuteness and discrimination than Mr. Stockdale; but that he either "degraded, dis-"paraged, or debased" the "glory," "the divine genius" of Milton, by asserting that his diction is sometimes peculiar and pedantic, and that rhyme is more distinctly melodious than blank-verse, we beg leave to doubt. Our author's affirmation, that Young and Thomson are poetical, notwithstanding they wrote in blank-verse; and that we may distinctly perceive, when the lines in blank-verse end or begin, is nothing to the purpose. The Doctor only asserted, that blank-verse, *as verse*, was inferior to rhyme: he did not assert, that no poet could animate the former, or that it might not be better suited to one particular bent of genius, than to another.—He had expressed, as clearly as human language would enable him, his preference of blank-verse, as best adapted to the loftier flights of poetry; and we can scarcely believe that Mr. Stockdale would contend for any further extension of the licence.

All his feelings are alive at the mention of Lycidas. It is here that he again bursts forth in an agony of sorrow; bewails the piteous state of modern poesy, and declares, that nothing can be produced so sweet, so tender, so enchanting, as Lycidas! His fits of hysterical indignation are here so outrageous, that on a cursory perusal, we could not help remembering certain expressions in the preface, which we had at first mistaken for a confession of stupidity, but which, on our arrival at page 192, we suspected to indicate a much more deplorable affliction. On turning, however, to certain productions of Mr. Hayley, we discovered that neither Mr. Stockdale's rage nor rapture was perfectly original.

As he displays, on all occasions, a mortal antipathy to metaphysics, we would entreat him to judge for once, at least, of a poetical production, by the rules of common sense. He will then be disposed to confess, that Lycidas displays more osten-

tation, than sorrow; that the mind, which can entertain itself with the language of pastoral, and the absurdities of classical mythology, is but little afflicted by the calamity that it so ingeniously deplores. In our own opinion, this celebrated poem possesses neither the tenderness of an elegy, nor the beauty of a pastoral. Lycidas is drowned, and of course, it might be expected that his friend should eulogize the virtues that endeared him to his remembrance, and lament the untimely fate by which he was torn from the pleasures of youth and the arms of friendship. But instead of expressing any feelings of natural emotion, or sensibility, he sits down and amuses himself with dreaming, like a school-boy in vacation-time, with the flocks of Admetus, and the shades of Mantua. Instead of thinking of his friend, he dilates, in verses not remarkable for their harmony, on the uncertainty of fame *(not of life)*, and talks of Phœbus, Doric lays, sandals gray, the shepherd's trade, and a thousand other subjects, the bare mention of which is sufficient to banish all delicacy of thought, and to destroy all simplicity of language.

He who believes that Johnson was incited by envy, or malignity, to attack the morals or the poetry of Milton, must likewise be prepared to account for his liberality of praise. Of his reflections on the political conduct of the poet, we shall say no more, than that we consider them as equally just and salutary. No man, who really loves the constitution of his country, or considers the advantage of a regulated government, can review the conduct of Milton with any other sentiments than regret and indignation. But in deciding upon the conduct and character of the author of *Paradise Lost*, it is not only necessary to enquire, whether every man has a right to perfect liberty of speech, or whether the opinions and principles that he supported, were rational and virtuous; but whether his support of them was the result of disinterested and dispassionate examination. It is not our present business to enquire whether the conduct of Milton was such

as characterizes a man who is only anxious in the cause of truth: it is sufficient for our purpose, that Johnson imagined it was not, and his indignation is, therefore, a proof of his independence, rather than his malignity.

Of the modest and amiable spirit with which Mr. Stockdale's defence of Milton has been conducted, every sentence, and every epithet is expressive. Johnson's criticism is declared to be feeble, confused, wicked, absurd, ridiculous, malignant, and horrible: his disposition is stigmatized as envious, malicious, and detestable, and every opinion that he advances and every expression that he employs, is condemned as the offspring of iniquity, blindness, spite, and folly. However deficient Mr. Stockdale may usually be in command of language, it cannot be denied, that his vocabulary of abuse is peculiarly copious.

If such be his language and his temper when he undertakes the defence of Milton, it will be easily supposed that he is not more decent, or more rational, when he becomes the champion of Gray. The language of Billingsgate is elegance itself, when compared with the critical denunciations of this formidable lecturer. What he wants in argument, he endeavours to supply by his scurrility; and if scurrility would serve his purpose, the friends of Johnson might tremble for his safety. Many of his calumnies, it is true, are mere repetitions from writers, as feeble and as outrageous as himself; but he has, at least, the merit of clothing them in language of which, with all their zeal, and all their impudence, his predecessors would have been ashamed.

His defence of Gray consists, like his defence of Milton, of assertion opposed to assertion, and calumny to argument. Dr. Johnson thinks that the Ode on Spring is too luxuriant in its language; Mr. Stockdale thinks that its language is supremely beautiful. Johnson dislikes the abrupt beginning of the bard, and Stockdale admires it; the former says, that the *Ode on the Death of a Cat* is a trifle, but not a happy trifle; the latter thinks that it was a *very happy* trifle,

and that he must be a *very unhappy* critic who condemned it. This is a fair specimen of the manner in which Johnson has been so repeatedly convicted of rancour, prejudice, and envy. To such attacks we have nothing to reply: we have no expectation of convincing or reforming the wilfully blind, or the obstinately wicked.

It is at least but reasonable to require that they who impeach the integrity of Johnson with so much eagerness and perseverance, should shew us that those passages of the bard which Johnson has censured as obscure, are easily understood, and that the imitator of an ode is entitled to equal praise with its author. The more Gray's productions are examined, the more will his readers be convinced that they are rather the production of intense labour and extensive reading, than of a very vigorous, or very poetical imagination.

But it is now time to leave Mr. Stockdale, and close this review with a few brief observations on the literary character of Dr. Johnson.

Between the conclusion of the Spectator and the commencement of the Rambler, there are no essays to be found, except in the "Champion" of Fielding, which are not disgusting and contemptible. It was Johnson who first taught us to unite the opposite beauties of regularity and variety, energy and elegance. Since the appearance of the Rambler, some regard to the melody of his periods, and the construction of his sentences has become absolutely necessary to every writer who wishes to be read, and our diurnal newspapers are written with greater elegance than many of the most elaborate productions of the age of Anne.

If the Essays of Johnson are distinguished by majesty of period, and magnificence of diction, his ideas and his images are equally glowing and sublime. If the prevailing characteristic of his style be uniformity, it cannot be denied that it is uniformity of excellence. He who forms a style superior to that of his predecessors, must necessarily be distinguished by some peculiarity of language and construction. Even of those

sesquipedalian words which so frequently occur in the Rambler, the repetition may partly be excused on account of the felicity with which they are adopted. He who can enchain the attention of his reader by the novelty of his thoughts, and the sublimity of his images; whose slightest efforts of composition display the imagination of a poet, and the judgment of a philosopher; and whose precepts have a powerful and invariable tendency to promote the interests of religion, and of virtue, may surely be forgiven, if he sometimes oversteps the rigid boundaries of language, and endeavours to elevate his diction to the energy and magnificence of his own conceptions.

That he may have been frequently excelled in grace of manner and abstruseness of learning, few of his admirers will be inclined to dipsute. But if his works be considered collectively, he is superior to every other writer in the profundity and elegance of his criticism, the energy and brilliance of his diction, the beauty and fertility of his illustrations.

However he may have been influenced by prejudice or passion in some of his opinions, there is no subject on which he has employed his powers, without elucidating it by the vigour and originality of his ideas, and adorning it by the splendour and elegance of his language.

RELIQUES OF ROBERT BURNS; CONSISTING CHIEFLY OF ORIGINAL LETTERS, POEMS, AND CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON SCOTTISH SONGS. COLLECTED AND PUBLISHED BY R. H. CROMEK. *London. Cadell and Davies.* 8*vo. pp.* xxiii. 453. 1808.

WHEN posterity's clear and steady gaze, undazzled by the prejudices and partialities with which contemporary criticism is blinded, shall have analysed the lustre of Burns's fame, the

orb that now glares so broadly and so brightly, seems destined to fade from its glittering greatness. Possibly, in the present period, a period scarcely mature for the accomplishment of such a prediction, the theorist, who ventures to examine this literary star, may share the fate of Galileo, and suffer as a heretic; but confidence in the justness of a cause is a strong support against the terrors even of persecution itself. It is the peculiar fate of prediction, that while its very nature is irresistibly suspicious, the facts which could accredit it, are necessarily too remote to do it justice.

Burns appears to have possessed an understanding, unusually vigorous and active, but heavily clogged by prejudice. His poetical genius, though very seldom exalted, was accidentally eloquent. He was by no means destitute of imagination, and he had a still larger proportion of feeling; but both the one and the other were greater than his taste. His humour was like a manual jest, sometimes amusing, but almost always vulgar. He undoubtedly rose far above the ordinary class of plain people, but not far above the generality of those who lift themselves into any degree of fame. He was a poet, but surely not an astonishing poet, except when considered as a peasant. There was more cause of surprise in his ever raising himself from the level of his native condition, than in the feats he performed when the exaltation was effected; for, after all, he was not a phœnix: he became a subject of curiosity, merely by having contrived to break his shell, and come forth without hatching.

Mr. Cromek, in this collection, which he has published as a supplementary volume to Dr. Currie's edition of Burns, has interwoven only so much of his own, as will make his readers regret that he has interwoven no more. His adoration of his author, that almost invariable weakness of commentators, a little obscures his critical perspicacity; but he sometimes evinces a very true and tender feeling. Thus he observes, in recording Burns's love for Mary Campbell, and the

sacredness with which he kept the anniversary of her death, that

"There are events in this transitory scene of existence, seasons "of joy or of sorrow, of despair or of hope, which, as they "powerfully affect us at the time, serve as epochs to the history of "our lives. They may be termed the trials of the heart.—We "treasure them deeply in our memory, and as time glides silently "away, they help us to number our days." (Reliques, p. 238. note.)

Mr. Cromek, even when considered no longer as an original author, still deserves respect, as a compiler. His work affords not only an opportunity for discussing the powers of the Scottish poet, but additional and very valuable data for appreciating them.

In order to form a just idea concerning Burns, we must bestow some attention on his general manner of thinking and expressing himself: and this examination may be best effected by promiscuous extracts from his prose and poetry.

It is generally thought that his great excellence is found in those pieces, where *humble and characteristic description* is sometimes softened with *serious passages*, and sometimes streaked with *broad humour*. Such are the Cotter's Saturday Night, and the tale of Tam O'Shanter. But, though the Cotter's Saturday Night undoubtedly deserves great praise, it is for other than *poetical* merit that this praise is due. Of late, indeed, a notion has gone abroad, which the popularity of some very energetic descriptions in rustic life appears to have greatly promoted, that these vivid, plain, coarse descriptions of actual nature, are evidences of poetical genius. But the title of Poetry, if it is of necessity due to all imitations of nature in verse, must be given to every line that has common sense and correct metre: and this must be confessed to induce an insurmountable absurdity. Poetry is conversant with the sublime, and with the tender, and with the pathetic, and with what Mr. Burke distinctively denominates *the fine*, and with the pleasingly picturesque, and with every modifi-

cation of the beautiful; but not with descriptions of disgusting, vulgar, mean, or even familiar objects. Now what poetry is there in such lines as these?—

"November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
The toil-worn *Cotter* frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the *morn* in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend."

(Currie's Burns, Vol. III. p. 174.)

In this description, there is an obvious resemblance to the opening of Gray's Elegy in a Country Church-yard; but there is no poetry, nothing but what, exclusively of the rhyme, the honest Cotter himself might very easily have uttered extempore. Nor is it possible to pronounce a judgment at all more flattering, on the poetry of those accurate strokes of character, which are shortly after presented in the lines on the reception of the eldest daughter's lover:

"Wi' kindly welcome *Jenny* brings him ben;
A strappan youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blythe *Jenny* sees the visit 's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye."

(Ibid. p. 176.)

Now these extracts are by no means selected as inferior parts of the poem, because in truth the whole tenour is very equal: nor is it intended to insinuate, that this tenour is in itself unworthy of approbation; but one may be permitted to urge, that it is not to be applauded as poetry. If the stanzas were translated into another language, or even simply divested of their rhyme, would the "disjecti membra poetæ," the scattered limbs of the poet, be perceived in that new modification? More probably the lines would be taken for memoranda, col-

lected for a chapter upon national manners, by some careful traveller, or historian. Tacitus's book *de moribus Germanorum*, if it were versified, would be much more like a poem than the Saturday Night; though perhaps nothing can be better than the Saturday Night, as a good, plain piece of sense and observation.

Tam O'Shanter possesses higher merits, together with a good deal of characteristic description, and broad humour; it contains lines, which deserve the name of poetry in the true sense of that word. Such are the following:

"But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
* * * * * * *
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm."—

(Vol. III. p. 327, 328.)

"Coffins stood round, like open presses,
"That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
"And by some devilish cantrip slight,
"Each in its cauld hand held a light."

(Ibid. p. 330.)

There is much humour in a little song, composed by the poet on his marriage:

"I hae a wife o' my ain,
I'll partake wi' nae-body;
I'll tak cuckold frae nane,
I'll gie cuckold to nae-body.

"I hae a penny to spend,
There—thanks to nae-body;
I hae naething to lend,
I'll borrow frae nae-body.

"I am nae-body's lord,
I'll be slave to nae-body;
I hae a guid braid sword,
I'll tak dunts frae nae-body.

"I'll be merry and free,
I'll be sad for nae-body;
If nae-body care for me,
I'll care for nae-body."

(Vol. I. p. 195. note.)

That however, which national partiality has celebrated as humour, is, in most instances, nothing better than *dull detail, with an offensive vulgarity both of sentiment and of expression.* From the sweep of this condemnation, the countrymen of Burns are now struggling hard to exempt the pieces in the Scottish tongue. But that point is not to be conceded without consideration; for Dr. Moore, himself a Scotchman, in one of his letters (Currie's Edition, Vol. II. p. 240) expressly advises our author to "abandon the Scottish stanza and dialect, and adopt the measure and language of modern English poetry." Now, if Scotchmen were unanimous in preferring Burns's Scotch writings, it might seem presumptuous in Southern critics to dispute about the pre-eminence; but when our own common sense is backed by so high an authority, we may reasonably question, if not deny, the great cleverness even of Halloween, Scotch Drink, and the Twa Dogs. Nay, the two former of these three poems may perhaps be pronounced absolutely tedious and heavy. As to the third, though more amusing, it breathes an offensive spirit of vulgar discontent, and a mischievous eagerness to misrepresent the constitution of society. Such topics were very seductive to this irascible bard, who never could forgive the higher classes of society, for being the higher classes. Indeed, as a politician, he was an extraordinary compound. His family had made him a Jacobite, and his opinions inclined him to be a Jacobin.

His vulgarity sometimes appears rather in particular expressions and allusions, than in the general tone of the piece: and of this fault one specimen will probably be quite sufficient. The author, after some lines of good, plain, natural feeling, speaks thus of his friend and of his wife:

"Fate still has blest me with a friend,
In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.
It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My *Davie* or my *Jean*.

"O, how that *name* inspires my style!
The words come skelpin rank and file,
Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phœbus and the famous Nine
Were glowrin owre my pen.
My spaviet *Pegasus* will limp,
'Till ance he's fairly het;
And then he'll hilch, and stilt, and jimp,
An' rin an unco fit;
But lest then, the beast then
Should rue this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty wizen'd hide."

(Vol. III. p. 160, 161.)

Burns's *descriptive merit* is not confined to the humorous and accurate delineation of character and manners. The appearances of external nature are often seized by his fancy, with all the skill and fidelity of a painter: as in the following passage, the style of which is not unlike the manner of Mr. Walter Scott:

"As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy air,
Where th' howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care,

"The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot alang the sky;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply.

"The stream adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's,
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whase distant roaring swells an fa's.

"The cauld blue North was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing eerie din;
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like fortune's favours, tint as win."
(Vol. IV. p. 345, 346,)

Through the greatest part of his works, Burns perpetually betrays a failing, which is almost inseparable from self-taught minds,—the notion that a thousand trite common-places, which have never been imparted to himself, must be important discoveries of his own, and of course can never have been yet imparted to other people. Accordingly we find him frequently preaching successions of flat, stale sentences, on the most threadbare topics of morality. There is page after page of such lines as the prosing stanza that follows:

"It's no in titles nor in rank,
It's no in wealth like Lon'on Bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in makin muckle *mair*:
It's no in books, its no in lear,
To make us truly blest:
If happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
Could make us happy lang;
The *heart* ay's the part ay,
That makes us right or wrang."
(Vol. III. p. 157.)

Sometimes his common-place is that of declamation: as in the following address to the shades of unknown ancient bards:

"O ye illustrious names unknown! who could feel so strongly "and describe so well; the last, the meanest of the muses' train— "one who, though far inferior to your flights, yet eyes your path, "and with trembling wing would sometimes soar after you—a "poor rustic bard unknown, pays this sympathetic pang to your "memory!" (Reliques, p. 348.)

But this style, though too prevalent, is not universal: for we frequently find a real originality of thought. The collection

now published, contains more ingenious prose, than all the preceding volumes, taken together. In a letter to two young ladies, he says neatly:

"I have one vexatious fault to the kindly-welcome, well-filled "sheet which I owe to your and Charlotte's goodness—it contains "too much sense, sentiment, and good-spelling. It is impossible "that even you two, whom I declare to my God, I will give credit "for any degree of excellence the sex are capable of attaining, it is "impossible you can go on to correspond at that rate; so like "those who, Shenstone says, retire because they have made a good "speech, I shall after a few letters hear no more of you. I insist "that you shall write whatever comes first: what you see, what "you read, what you hear, what you admire, what you dislike, "trifles, bagatelles, nonsense; or to fill up a corner, e'en put down "a laugh at full length." (Reliques, p. 41.)

The following reflections on self-appreciation, contain good sense:

"I have often observed, in the course of my experience of human "life, that every man, even the worst, has something good about "him; though very often nothing else than a happy temperament "of constitution inclining him to this or that virtue. For this rea- "son, no man can say in what degree any other person, besides "himself, can be, with strict justice, called *wicked*. Let any, of "the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us, exa- "mine impartially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not "from any care or vigilance, but for want of opportunity, or some "accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses "of mankind he has escaped, because he was out of the line of "such temptation; and, what often, if not always, weighs more "than all the rest, how much he is indebted to the world's good "opinion, because the world does not know all: I say, any man "who can thus think, will scan the failings, nay, the faults and "crimes, of mankind around him, with a brother's eye."
(Reliques, p. 322, 323.)

There is a good deal of *imagination* in this too:

"My worst enemy is *Moimême*. I lie so miserably open to "the inroads and incursions of a mischievous, light-armed, well- "mounted banditti, under the banners of imagination, whim, "caprice, and passion; and the heavy-armed veteran regulars of "wisdom, prudence and forethought, move so very, very slow, "that I am almost in a state of perpetual warfare, and alas! fre- "quent defeat. There are just two creatures that I would envy,

"a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, and an "oyster on some of the desart shores of Europe. The one has not "a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear." (Reliques, p. 44, 45.)

The following sentence, in defence of marriage, is ungrammatical, but very *eloquent:*

"If the relations we stand in to king, country, kindred, and "friends, be any thing but the visionary fancies of dreaming "metaphysicians; if religion, virtue, magnanimity, generosity, "humanity, and justice, be aught but empty sounds: then the man "who may be said to live only for others, for the beloved, "honourable female whose tender faithful embrace endears life, "and for the helpless little innocents who are to be the men and "women, the worshippers of his God, the subjects of his king, "and the support, nay the very vital existence of his COUNTRY, in "the ensuing age;—compare such a man with any fellow what-"ever, who, whether he bustle and push in business among "labourers, clerks, statesmen; or whether he roar and rant, and "drink and sing in taverns—a fellow over whose grave no one will "breathe a single heigh-ho, except from the cobweb-tie of what "is called good fellowship—who has no view nor aim but what "terminates in himself--if there be any grovelling earthborn "wretch of our species, a renegado to common sense, who would "fain believe that the noble creature, man, is no better than a "sort of fungus, generated out of nothing, nobody knows how, "and soon dissipating in nothing, nobody knows where; such a "stupid beast, such a crawling reptile might balance the fore-"going unexaggerated comparison, but no one else would have the "patience." (Reliques, p. 93, 94.)

An *ingenious* thought occurs, upon anger, impatience, resentment, and envy:

"They eat up the immortal part of man! If they spent their "fury only on the unfortunate objects of them, it would be some-"thing in their favour; but these miserable passions, like traitor "Iscariot, betray their lord and master." (Reliques, p. 368.)

And it would be difficult to find a passage, containing more *brilliancy of metaphor*, than the simile addressed to a powerful minister:

"At an age when others are the votaries of pleasure, or under-"lings in business, you had attained the highest wish of a British "Statesman; and with the ordinary date of human life, what a

"prospect was before you! Deeply rooted in *royal favour*, you "overshadowed the land. The birds of passage, which follow "ministerial sun-shine through every clime of political faith and "manners, flocked to your branches; and the beasts of the field, "(the lordly possessors of hills and vallies,) crowded under your "shade. 'But behold, a watcher, a holy one came down from "'heaven, and cried aloud, and said thus: Hew down the tree, "'and cut off his branches; shake off his leaves, and scatter his "'fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from "'his branches!'" (Reliques, p. 179.)

Our poet was frequently guilty of what looked like gross *affectation*, though perhaps in reality it was nothing more than *a want of* that *good taste*, to which education seems indispensably requisite. Thus:

"Compliments is such a miserable Greenland expression; lies "at such a chilly polar distance from the torrid zone of my con-"stitution, that I cannot, for the very soul of me, use it to any "person for whom I have the twentieth part of the esteem, every "one must have for you who knows you:" (Reliques, p. 50, 51.)

which, but for the frequency of similar passages, one would be tempted to suppose written as a joke. And thus the *redundance of antithesis and epithet* in the following sentence:

"Whether a man shall shake hands with welcome in the dis-"tinguished elevation of respect, or shrink from contempt in the "abject corner of insignificance; whether he shall wanton under "the tropic of plenty, at least enjoy himself in the comfortable "latitudes of easy convenience, or starve in the arctic circle of "dreary poverty; whether he shall rise in the manly consciousness "of a self-approving mind, or sink beneath a galling load of regret "and remorse – these are alternatives of the last moment." (Reliques, p. 66, 67.)

The admirers of Burns aver, that if his taste is not always pure, the defect is at least compensated by a perpetual *vigour*. They are greatly deceived: they confound *vigour* with *violence*. No doubt our author is sometimes vigorous; but his sentences often strain at vigour, till the effort reduces them to imbecillity. The vulgar may view the impotence of rage as

the symptom of valour: but a mind like Burns's ought to have been aware that unnatural exertion paralyzes as mischievously as relaxation itself. Thus we find a man, for having shot at a hare out of the season, denounced in this furious stanza:

> "Inhuman man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
> And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;
> May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
> Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!"
>
> Vol. III. p. 335.

In the foregoing instance the fault is chiefly that of over-strained expression. In other cases, the violence, which is substituted for strength, seems a violence, not so much of expression, as of sentiment. The poet's feelings have been sore and irritable, and then he has mistaken the writhings of his mortification or spleen, for the energy of muscular genius. A natural, but a mischievous mistake:—for it was never found that in poetry, as in mechanics, impetus could be made to answer the purpose of positive power. The techy pertness and high-flying folly of these unjust lines may serve to illustrate his error:

> "Let prudence number o'er each sturdy son,
> Who life and wisdom at one race begun,
> Who feel by reason, and who give by rule,
> (Instinct's a brute and sentiment a fool!)
> Who make poor *will do* wait upon *I should*—
> We own they're prudent, but who feels they're good?
> Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye!
> God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy?
> But come ye who the godlike pleasure know,
> Heaven's attribute distinguish'd—to bestow!
> Whose arms of love would grasp the human race;" &c.
>
> Vol. II. p. 174.

Among the best instances of genuine vigour, are his two epistles to Mr. Graham, and his fragment of an epistle to Mr. Fox. And there is another poem, which, not having been published in the earlier editions of his works, is little

known; but which, when once observed, must needs be admired, not only for vigour, but for truth, and for poetry.

"Written in Friars-Carse Hermitage, on Nith-Side.

"Thou whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
Grave these counsels on thy soul.

"Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine ev'ry hour,
Fear not clouds will always lour.

"As youth and love with sprightly dance,
Beneath thy morning star advance,
Pleasure with her siren air
May delude the thoughtless pair;
Let prudence bless enjoyment's cup,
Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.

"As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits would'st thou scale?
Check thy climbing step, elate,
Evils lurk in felon wait:
Dangers, eagle-pinioned, bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold,
While cheerful peace, with linnet song,
Chants the lowly dells among.

"As the shades of ev'ning close,
Beck'ning thee to long repose;
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-nook of ease,
There ruminate with sober thought,
On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive younkers round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound.
Say, man's true, genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not, art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Did many talents gild thy span?
Or frugal nature grudge thee one?
Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heav'n,
To virtue or to vice is giv'n.

Say, to be just, and kind, and wise,
There solid self-enjoyment lies;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways,
Lead to the wretched, vile, and base.

"Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep;
Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
Night, where dawn shall never break,
Till future life, future no more,
To light and joy the good restore,
To light and joy unknown before.

"Stranger, go! Heav'n be thy guide!
Quod the beadsman of Nith-side."

Vol. III. p. 298, 299, 300.

The great merit of Bruce's address to his army, that address so loudly and so eagerly praised, it is not equally easy to discover. This poem may be exceedingly animating to the hearts of Scots: associations or prejudices can make any thing delightful to particular minds; but with people in general, it passes for a versified paraphrase of the common newspaper-addresses about dying for freedom.

Many of Burns's writings breathe a spirit of *independence*, which is naturally pleasing to the hearts of generous readers; but he has carried his virtue so far, as to make it look rather like a tedious and impertinent affectation, than like the genuine nobleness of a great soul. This, again, is want of taste and education. He seems to fancy that his muse is catching an air of grandeur, as he swells her with these pompous inflations: and brags of his freedom as if he were afraid of being suspected for a slave. Yet his writings are by no means deficient in a *courtier-like flexibility to certain individuals of the higher rank*. On some occasions, he not only saw the merits of greatness, but, in the intoxication of his enthusiasm, saw them double. However, even in the overflowings of his adulation, his independence is not omitted: he just mentions it, by way of heightening his compliment. The following affectation occurs in a letter, inclosing some complimentary verses to Lord Glencairn:

"Almost every poet has celebrated his patrons, particularly when they were names dear to fame, and illustrious in their country; allow me, then, my lord, if you think the verses have intrinsic merit, to tell the world how much I have the honour to be—Your lordship's highly indebted, and ever grateful humble servant." Vol. II. p. 56.

To justify such a conclusion, Lord Glencairn should have been a prodigy. He was doubtless a very estimable man; but, *dear* as *Fame* is described to have held him, that fickle female has forgotten him already.

It yet remains to make some specific observation upon two other qualities of Burns's genius—his *feeling* and his *diction*. If his feeling had been accompanied by taste and cultivation, and enforced by any peculiar felicity of language, he must have deserved a place of very glorious eminence. But his sensibilities, as well as his other merits, become too often ineffective, for want of originality and elegance in the expression. The hackneyed topics of tenderness recur with unreasonable frequency, in phraseology no less hackneyed; and though there certainly are some charming exceptions to this general statement, such exceptions are by no means numerous.

It is rather unfortunate, that while, in the kindred art of painting, the English school have devoted themselves with so decided a partiality to colouring, the poets, in spite of a few noble examples, have generally neglected the cultivation of that felicity in diction, which to them is precisely what colouring is to the painter. The *medium* or *language* of art is not indeed so important as the *design;* but that medium is the allurement, the attraction, the charm to the sense, if not the most solid enjoyment to the understanding.

The expression and versification of Burns have certainly found admirers; but such admiration is only a proof, how little progress the philosophers of criticism have made in analysing the charms of diction. Diction, even when it has risen above mediocrity, may still fall short of excellence, in two

ways: first, by that kind of mannerism, that repetition and monotony of structure, which have been so dangerously sanctified by some great authorities: and secondly, by that mere faultless simplicity, which is not adorned and inspirited by any peculiar felicity of expression. Burns's diction, when it rises above mediocrity, is free from mannerism, but not often animated by fortunate phraseology: it is simple, and no more. Now simplicity is a material requisite of style; but surely it ranks rather among negative than among positive virtues: and the consequence that it has acquired, seems owing less to its real importance, than to the dangers attendant on the vices that are its opposites. Simplicity alone, which is but a correct freedom from mannerism, is not, therefore, sufficient to merit the highest reputation for a poet's style. Shakspeare and Horace afford innumerable examples of perfect simplicity; but in these poets it is heightened by a peculiar happiness of expression: a happiness, which, in any form, is sufficient to characterise its possessor, and distinguish him from all other writers. A characteristic quality can never consist in mere simplicity; for simplicity being, as has before been observed, little more than negative, may be gained from taste and education, without any genius. Nor will this glorious distinction be the lot of mere mannerists; because these, being easily mimicked, become of course confounded with their followers. The mannerism of Dr. Johnson, beautiful as it is, has been often and not unhappily imitated; but Shakspeare was never copied with success. And why not? Because, without losing sight of simplicity, he could not only strike out paths which others had never trodden, but alter his course so frequently, as to vary no less from himself than from his competitors. That diction, which is at once striking and various, which, while it attracts admiration by its originality, allows no repetition to betray the secret of its magic, is not a manner, but a style.

Though Burns, in avoiding the errors of manner, has failed

to arrive at the excellence of style, he deserves, for his diction in general, at least a negative commendation—and, in a few brilliant instances, a positive praise. He has not often overlaid his feeling, by the antithesis and bombast that deform his declamation. He generally writes his sensations as they come from his heart, without adulterating them in his head. He pretends to no peculiarities, and pleases by that purity.

The most favourable extract that can be presented from his works, is the little song of "John Anderson, my Jo:"

"John Anderson my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo.

"John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a canty day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go;
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo."—Vol. IV. p. 302, 303.

Burns's Epitaph on himself, deserves to be recorded:

"Is there a whim-inspired fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool,
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,
And drap a tear.

"Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this area throng,
O, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here heave a sigh.

"Is there a man, whose judgment clear,
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
Wild as the wave;
Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

"The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame,
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name!

"Reader, attend—whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious, *self-control*
Is wisdom's root."

Vol. III. p. 342, 343.

And scarcely less interesting is the address which, in the second *Duan* of his first Vision, he supposes himself to have received from his muse. Nothing can be more deeply touching than the concluding four lines of the following stanza, which terminates the "Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn:"

"The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!"

Vol. III. p. 323.

The same kind of beauty is observable in the apostrophe uttered by Mary, Queen of Scots, to her child:

"My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine;

And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine!
God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee:
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!" -- Vol. III. p. 313.

And Mr. Cromek has preserved a poem, containing these tender lines:

"But to see her, was to love her;
"Love but her, and love for ever.
"Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
"Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
"Never met—or never parted,
"We had ne'er been broken-hearted!"
(Reliques, p. 429.)

His prose, sometimes, though not so often, interests the heart with strong pathos: Thus,

"Can it be possible, that when I resign this frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence! When the last gasp of agony has announced that I am no more to those that knew me, and the few who loved me; when the cold, stiffened, unconscious, ghastly corse is resigned into the earth, to be the prey of unsightly reptiles, and to become in time a trodden clod, shall I yet be warm in life, seeing and seen, enjoying and enjoyed?"—Vol. II. p. 271.

Sometimes his feeling degenerates into *cant*: as,

"My much esteemed friend, Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel, has just "read me a paragraph of a letter he had from you. Accept, Sir, "of the silent throb of gratitude; for words would but mock the "emotion of my soul." (Reliques, p. 139.)

And sometimes we find the most wretched *puerility*: as in the address to the wood-lark—and in these verses:

"Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,
"How can ye blume sae fair;
"How can ye chant, ye little birds,
"And I sae fu' o' care!

"Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
"That sings upon the bough;
"Thou minds me o' the happy days
"When my fause luve was true."
(Reliques, p. 17, 18.)

A critic has little concern with the moral character of authors; and it is hardly necessary to say more of their private life, than what may be requisite for fairly appreciating their genius. Therefore, in the history of Burns, his education is the only circumstance that seems to demand any particular observation; and this part of the subject is the more deserving of attention, because the disadvantages of his early life have been often exaggerated, and, even where correctly related, have been widely misconceived in their effects.

Burns was the son of a very poor man, and passed the first years of his life in severe bodily labour; but he was early instructed in reading, writing, and the ordinary knowledge of the Scottish peasantry. Besides, long before he arrived at manhood, some fortunate circumstances threw him into the society of persons, better informed than himself or his rustic associates. Thus, in early youth, he imbibed a strong taste for intellectual occupation in general, and particularly a love for poetry. He was slightly initiated, though not regularly educated, in several useful pursuits, and studied Pope, Thomson, and Shakspeare, with great assiduity. Therefore, it appears that the disadvantages, under which he laboured, were not so much neglect and ignorance, as connexions and occupations, unsuited, perhaps, to the developement of a poetical genius.

All his encouragements, to be sure, did not amount to an education, and of course will not bar him from claiming the allowances, which the world is accustomed to make in such instances. But some among his adherents, in the ardour of their hearts, have asserted that the admiration, which he has received upon allowance for his humble condition in life, is a

vulgar wonder; and that a man whose youthful mind was improved by the studies before enumerated, is not treated with fairness, when he is praised, merely as an example of untaught intellect performing strange things. Surely such adherents do our Poet more injury than service; for the faults which are pardonable, when their author is considered as an uneducated peasant, can by no means be forgiven, if he is to be examined on equal terms with writers in general. However, it is but justice to these admirers to allow, that, when they are very closely pushed with respect to some of his defects, and cannot find any other defence, they by no means permit a false shame to deter them from taking shelter behind those excuses of his condition, which, on other occasions, are unworthy of their notice. As soon as the pressure of attack has abated, Burns is again restored to his former point of view, and once more contemplated, not as a peasant, but as a classical writer. Some very zealous friends go so far as to maintain, that the circumstances of his life, which most people would think inauspicious, are rather to be esteemed fortunate, and that he "was placed perhaps in a situation more favourable to the developement of great poetical talents, than any other which could have been assigned him." This argument, and some concomitant disparagements of education, seem to have been devised for the purpose of proving, that, as *disadvantages* are *advantageous* for first-rate poetry, and as thus Burns *ought to have been* a first-rate poet, therefore Burns *was* a first-rate poet. Here we have a remarkable instance of a paradox adduced to prop a mistake: and a very pernicious paradox it is. It teaches the young to disregard application and study: it encourages them to throw away the rudder: and commends them to the blind steerage of nature, and genius, and inspiration, and the rest of those indefinite impulses, which people, who are not fond of trouble, find so very convenient as pleadable substitutes for diligence.

Great as has been the mischief, which, in all ages and on all questions, has arisen from the vagueness of metaphysical notions, and from the want of precise definitions for the ordinarily occurring phrases and terms of argumentation, in no instance, perhaps, has the evil been more extensive or more permanent, than in the very ancient feud respecting the nature and attributes of genius. For the influence of false doctrines on this head operates for the most part in that early period of life, when faith is romantic, and judgment weak. Error, sown in such soil, strikes root but too quickly and too deeply. A futile, glittering theory is constructed, by which genius is described as indescribable, design as fortuitous, and reason as unreasonable: paradox is piled upon paradox, gaudy and intricate, puzzling and dazzling the sight: the intellectual powers are snatched from the severe grasp of common sense, and veiled, like Homer's heroes, in bright impenetrable clouds. When all this deception has been practised, the aspiring youth begins to think, that genius is really an unaccountable phenomenon, a fairy-gift: he disdains to sully its immaterial purity with the contamination of gross and clogging rules: he leaves study to the dull, and takes his chance with nature!

That such wild fancies should be propagated by the vulgar, (who know nothing of genius by experience, but who love the marvellous, and would always rather believe any extraordinary appearance to be the creation of magic, than the offspring of capacity duly cultivated,) is natural and intelligible enough: nor can we wonder, that some of those, who possess genius, are anxious to keep up the quackery, and mislead the public as to the causes of the conjuration. But really it seems somewhat extraordinary, that the grave and critical part of mankind should allow themselves to join in the common cant against polish and education. The minds that could sink under the usual cultivation which the higher ranks in this country receive, must be very weak minds indeed.

The absence of cultivation is supposed to give room for ori-

ginality. Why, to be sure, a thought, whether it have been produced by other authors or not, is always original to him who utters it, if he is not aware of its previous production: and so far indeed originality is promoted by the absence of cultivation; but such originality is of very little use to the world, and evinces no great superiority in the author. Now the only valuable originality, the production of something which may be new not only to the author's mind, but to that of his reader, is doubtless more likely to be attained by the man, who, knowing what others have already done, is enabled to form some estimate of that which it remains for him to do, than by one who, being little acquainted with preceding exertions, perpetually wastes his strength and his time, in performing that, which a moderate degree of information would have told him was performed already. Finally, the arguments of those who undervalue cultivation, involve this palpable absurdity:—that the art of poetry, unlike all other arts, has made, and can make, no improvement: that the experience of the past is unavailing: and that every succeeding bard, to the end of time, must discover, by his own unguided efforts, those contrivances of plan, those artifices of contrast, those harmonies of cadence, those delicacies of phraseology, in short, all those thousand auxiliaries, that administer so sweetly and so powerfully to the effect of poetry. How many endurable poets would be produced by this unassisted course, the reader will easily guess. A large vocabulary of high-sounding phrases, about freedom from all system, may be, and has been, scattered abroad, by poets whom nobody will be at the pains of reading; but surely the writers, destined to be admired by posterity, have been, with very, very few exceptions, men who have not thought themselves unjust to their own genius, in referring to the experience of their predecessors.

Even those advantages, which such a life as Burns's can bestow, scanty as they are in comparison with the benefits of literary education and society, do not appear to have been all

seized by his genius. The poetry of the untaught bards has been distinguished, in almost every nation, by a plain sublimity, an unaffected elevation, which rude scenery and simple manners appear to have promoted. The resources of such a style indeed are soon exhausted; but, as long as they last, they are among the most powerful and affecting. Even through the gloomy fustian of the son of Fingal, this sublime of nature sometimes flashes out.—But Burns caught very little of lofty inspiration. It must be confessed, that he was not a Highlander, and therefore had not the very best opportunities of contemplating nature in the magnificent dispositions of her Scottish scenery. But magnificence, at any rate, does not appear to have been a quality of Burns's genius. His genius, like his understanding, was rather strong than majestic: better calculated to seize particulars with vigorous originality, than to embrace and adorn a general view. It is impossible to read his works, without discovering, that, on almost every subject, he had some partial error, some bias or prejudice, that excluded or distorted comprehensive speculation. His was a near-sighted kind of intellect, that saw collateral and distant objects dimly, though it had a more than common penetration in scanning what came within its scope. Such minds may be capable of much; but yet they are not of the highest order. A mind of the highest order must be unclouded and comprehensive: it must possess the faculty of assigning a proportionate importance to every relation of a subject, and of passing onward from detail to combination. The power of thus seizing general results with truth, valuable as it is in every pursuit of poetry and philosophy, is most peculiarly necessary to the sublime: which, without respect to any disputes concerning its mode of affecting the mind, may safely be affirmed to have little concern with partial surveys and curious details.

Much of the popularity that attended Burns, appears to have arisen from the accident of his being a Scotchman. The mutual partiality, so conspicuous among the natives of the

North, laudable as it is in principle and expedient in practice, induces them now and then to exceed the preference, that a Scotchman might reasonably claim from them, above an Englishman with equal merits, and betrays them into an exaltation of Scotchmen with moderate talents, above Englishmen of abilities greatly superior. Coming forth with this national advantage, Burns of course enlisted prejudice in his favour: and prejudice was in his instance furthered by vanity. For the Scotch, at the time of his appearance, had scarcely any poets: and a bard was a phænomenon as much to be boasted in that day, as a timber-tree. Of any scarce commodity, a very moderate sample will generally pass as excellent. The Romans applauded Terence as a comic author: and the Chinese admire the landscape of a tea-tray.

What would have been the fate of Burns, if he had been born an Englishman, it is not difficult to guess. He would doubtless have been treated as much beneath his desert, as in Scotland he was over-valued. In this country, genius is not encouraged. If a man of talent have confidence and resolution enough to brave the obstacles that oppose his outset, and money enough to support the contest till the arrival of a brighter season, he may succeed in England; but very vain are the hopes of those who expect assistance while assistance is yet, important. Nothing is to be gained but from a steady perseverance. Character and talent united, are indeed irresistible in the end: and vanity, or fear, will at length afford that notice which generosity and taste ought spontaneously to have bestowed. The refreshing streams of fortune are not showered on genius: they must be wrung forth with long and laborious effort. Many and many a noble mind, which timidity, or poverty, or some other blameless evil forbids to seek the public observation, lingers in hopeless obscurity for want of what costs nothing, the notice of the higher classes. There are some creditable exceptions to this general insensibility; but they

are very few, and by no means capable of attending to all the genius, that deserves consideration. Thus perish the best years of youth, in struggles for a precarious livelihood, or in the inactivity of total despondence. Undoubtedly, in some particulars, the present age excels all that have preceded it; but it is lamentably deficient in the patronage of genius. Even so lately as forty or fifty years ago, the case was less deplorable. The fine ladies in London had taken literature into their hands, and they exercised their duties with something like that ardour which existed at Paris, before the revolution, in the golden days described by Marmontel. Under the auspices of fashion, arose a long series of poets and wits, who having shone originally by the lustre of their protectors, repaid the debt by the reflection of a tenfold light. In political life, it was the pride of noblemen who possessed boroughs, to send to parliament such representatives as would do honour to their patrons.—Mr. Dunning, Colonel Barré, and Mr. Burke, were thought more creditable friends, than those silent members who can assist a cause with nothing but their votes. Such was the creed of the Shelburnes and the Charlemonts; but their mode is quite obsolete. No man of genius has been brought forward, since the first appearance of Mr. Canning—which is now almost twenty years ago. It is unhappily true, that a part of this mischief must be imputed to the sufferers themselves. So many men of genius have been loose, unprincipled profligates, irregular in their habits, and vulgar in their manners, that genius itself has been brought into an ill-repute. The name of author, instead of being, as it once was, a title of honour, now denotes too often, a vagabond, who being too lazy to learn any regular employment, rather paradoxically selects that vocation which of all others requires the greatest labour. On such writers disgrace deservedly descends; but there seems no necessity for involving merit in the penance of vice, and altogether withholding good, because good has been partially abused.

Literature has need of a revolution, both in her authors and in her patrons.

Many of the faults which dishonour genius, were exceedingly conspicuous in Burns: a dissolute conduct with respect to women, a dreadful propensity to intoxication, and a general wildness and imprudence, in thought, word, and deed. But all this did not prevent the Scotch from noticing and applauding him. To be sure, their patronage added little to his fortune; but fortune is not the best blessing in the gift of the great. Fame is in their power: and fame, though it be but air, is vital air to a poet. Burns longed for reputation, not for wealth: he gained a decent maintenance by the humble situation, which the influence of his more powerful friends procured for him under government: and perhaps a decent maintenance was all that he had a right to expect, as solid reward. The rich can hardly be expected to make larger pecuniary presents, than may be sufficient to save a poet from sinking beneath absolute distress. There should still perhaps remain enough of pressure, to keep activity and industry always alert.

Burns was not only praised during life by the great, but deified after death by his biographers and commentators. Dr. Currie, Mr. Cromek, and the rest of our poet's critical eulogists, have done small service to literature by their zeal in his favour. The temptation to write carelessly and rapidly, like Burns, is but too powerful in all cases; but it certainly is in some degree counteracted by the dread of posterity's neglect or condemnation. Complaint may therefore justly be made of biographers, who praise all the weaknesses of their hero, and lead the injudicious to believe that faults are immaterial in great men. We read of a custom among the ancient Egyptians, which was thought extremely advantageous to the state. They brought the dead bodies of their kings to a regular trial before the performance of any funeral rite, in order that the merits of the deceased might undergo that investigation, which would not have been conducted without bias during life. According to the re-

sult of this trial, the final obsequies were granted or denied. But modern biographers embalm without the process of enquiry, and enshrine alike the vicious and the pure.

He seems to have been perfectly aware of his own real value: and his manner of expressing his opinions on this subject is pleasingly free, both from the presumption of conceit on the one hand, and from the affectation of modesty on the other. In a sort of common-place book of his own, he says:

"*Observations, Hints, Songs, Scraps of Poetry, &c. by R. B.*—a man who had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it; but was, however, a man of some sense, a great deal of honesty, and unbounded good-will to every creature, rational and irrational. As he was but little indebted to scholastic education, and bred at a plough-tail, his performances must be strongly tinctured with his unpolished rustic way of life; but as I believe they are really his *own*, it may be some entertainment to a curious observer of human nature, to see how a ploughman thinks and feels, under the pressure of love, ambition, anxiety, grief, with the like cares and passions, which, however diversified by the *modes* and *manners* of life, operate pretty much alike, I believe, on all the species." (Vol. II. p. 5.)

In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, he exclaims:

"You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet. Alas! Madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities deserved some notice; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity and crude unpolished ideas on my head—I assure you, Madam, I do not dissemble when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice, which has borne me to a height where I am absolutely, feelingly certain my abilities are inadequate to support me; and too surely do I see that time when the same tide will leave me, and recede, perhaps, as far below the mark of truth. I do not say this in the ridiculous affectation of self-abasement and modesty. I have studied myself, and know what ground I occupy; and, however a friend or the world

may differ from me in that particular, I stand for my own opinion, in silent resolve, with all the tenaciousness of property. I mention this to you, once for all, to disburthen my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say more about it.—But

'when proud fortune's ebbing tide recedes,'

you will bear me witness, that, when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood, unintoxicated, with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward with rueful resolve to the hastening time when the blow of Calumny should dash it to the ground, with all the eagerness of vengeful triumph." (Vol. II. pp. 40, 41.)

And the same thought occurs in a letter to the Rev. G. Lowrie:

"I thank you, Sir, with all my soul, for your friendly hints; though I do not need them so much as my friends are apt to imagine. You are dazzled with newspaper accounts and distant reports; but in reality, I have no great temptation to be intoxicated with the cup of prosperity. Novelty may attract the attention of mankind awhile; to it I owe my present éclat: but I see the time not far distant, when the popular tide, which has borne me to a height of which I am, perhaps, unworthy, shall recede, with silent celerity, and leave me a barren waste of sand, to descend at my leisure to my former station. I do not say this in the affectation of modesty; I see the consequence is unavoidable, and am prepared for it. I had been at a good deal of pains to form a just, impartial estimate of my intellectual powers before I came here; I have not added, since I came to Edinburgh, any thing to the account; and I trust I shall take every atom of it back to my shades, the coverts of my unnoticed, early years." (Ibid. p. 48.)

Even if a doubt of Burns's poetical immortality had not been suggested by that general deficiency of very transcendent beauties, which, not withstanding a few meritorious passages, determines him a secondary writer, such a doubt would have sprung from the ordinary complexion of his subjects and of his dialect. A very large proportion of his poetry is written on topics of a peculiar cast. It is easy to conceive, that petty malignities and trifling attachments may have deeply interested our author himself, in Death and Dr. Hornbook, the Brigs of Ayr, the Calf, Poor Mailie, Tam Samson, and a long list of similar works; but the interest attached in the mind of an au-

thor to the topics and phrases that engage his Muse, by no means extends itself to the minds of his readers. Those works will not be long admired, which cannot be understood, by students in general, without notes and references, biographical sketches, anecdotes, and explanations of particular conversations or occurrences. Among the Scotch indeed, Burns's credit may endure a little longer than on the Southern banks of the Tweed: for there is a great proportion of verbal peculiarities, of local descriptions, and of allusions to national habits, which is likely to be more relished where it is more familiar. But the Scottish language—for the title of a *language* ought not perhaps to be denied to a vocabulary so much nobler than the provincial dialects—the Scottish language is gradually waning: and thence its bards seem fated to become obsolete. If, like the Greek and Roman writers, the Scottish authors possessed any very striking beauties, any soul of poetry to keep alive the corruptible frame of their diction, they might be preserved amid all the decays of time. But having little more to recommend them, than a moderate share of ease and pastoral simplicity, a few pretty images on the subject of love, and a few characteristic descriptions in the Dutch style of painting, they will probably descend, even with their own countrymen, to that kind of neglect, which, among English readers, is at this day the lot of Fergusson, and Allan Ramsay, and one or two other Northern bards, well known by their names, but not at all by their works.

Though these pages are so bold as to predict the gradual decline of Burns's fame, let it be remembered, that this decline is not mentioned here as an occurrence likely to be immediate. Independently of the merit which he certainly possesses, many temporary causes yet continue to prevent the multitude from judging him clearly. Something is accomplished in favour of his reputation, by the still extant aristocracy, who delight to boast of having known a poet; and something, by the hodiernal taste for wonders. But the principal cause of present error

is, that, of late years, the leading departments of literature, both poetical and critical, have been almost exclusively in the hands of Scotchmen. With such advantages, it can be no wonder that Burns is still overvalued. But it is to be hoped for the credit of English talent, that the literary ascendency of our ingenious neighbours will not endure for ever: in process of time their domination may be superseded, and, with the sovereign influence, appear destined to fall the favourites whom the sovereign influence has upborne.

A COURSE OF LECTURES ON NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, AND THE MECHANICAL ARTS. BY THOMAS YOUNG, M.D. &c. 2 *Vols.* 4*to.*—1807.

THE accumulation of knowledge, which the observations and the exertions of about thirty centuries have produced, exceeds, in an unappreciable degree, the capacity of a human being. Though divided into branches under appropriate denominations, and though a single individual generally directs his attention to not more than one or two of those branches; yet it can but seldom be said, that he becomes thoroughly possessed of the former; nor can it be denied, that the difficulty of comprehending and retaining increases in proportion as science advances. But the same industry, which has ascertained a multitude of useful facts, and has thus extended the limits of the arts and the sciences, has likewise contrived means of assisting the mind, both in the comprehension, and in the retention, of those facts.—The former of these objects is attained by clear, rational, and methodical explanations;—the latter, by arrangements in written repositories, wherein any particular kind of information may be easily and regularly obtained.

The late rapid advancement of Philosophy in all its branches, having frequently demanded a renewal of those books which profess to explain its principles and to record its valuable discoveries, various such works have accordingly been produced, and among those, it cannot, upon examination, be denied, that one of the best which the public has received, is the work which forms the object of the present account. Two bulky quarto volumes, although too large for an elementary treatise, and too small for a complete and extended view of the subject, will, nevertheless, be found to contain a prodigious stock of information, far exceeding the quantity which might be reasonably expected from the size of the volumes, or from the labour of a single individual. A work so large, so comprehensive, and yet so concise, must naturally afford ample scope both for criticism, and for commendation. But the voice of impartiality, which weighs each separate part, and determines the result of the whole, is compelled to pronounce a most favourable report on the merit of the performance.

The first volume, consisting of about 800 pages, contains (after a preface and an ample table of contents) sixty lectures in three divisions, under the titles of Mechanics, Hydrodynamics, and Physics; each of which divisions comprehends twenty lectures. Those lectures were compiled for the purpose of being read at the Royal Institution, to which place Dr. Young was appointed Professor of Natural Philosophy, and where he accordingly read them during two successive years. They were afterwards revised, corrected, and enlarged, by the addition of the most recent discoveries, and, under that form, they were finally offered to the public in the year 1807.

The same volume likewise contains 43 copper plate engravings, to each of which a short explanation is annexed in the opposite page, and which exhibit the delineations of a vast number of instruments, results of experiments, natural phenomena, and diagrams for illustration. Some of the figures

which relate to optics, are neatly coloured. The plates are full, but the figures in general are small, rather too much so for most readers.

In the compilation of these lectures, Dr. Young has not only undertaken to explain the chief, or leading principles of natural philosophy; but he has also endeavoured to mention all the collateral or dependant subjects, such for instance, as the application of mechanics, of hydrostatics, of astronomy, of optics, &c. to the common purposes of economy, to the arts, and to manufactures. He has, in truth, embraced a much greater variety of subjects than is usually explained in a course of philosophical lectures, or in philosophical treatises; but he has treated them in a manner neither too profound, nor too particular; having justly adapted them to the purpose of giving a general information of those matters to a mixed company, such as may be expected to attend the Royal Institution. To a company of that description, the intricacy of strict demonstrations, the long lists of facts of certain denominations, the minute numerical determinations of weight, of temperature, of refraction, of expansion, of hardness, of gravity, of transparency, and so forth, will always prove both tedious and useless; it being hardly to be expected that the hearer should follow a long demonstration without interruption, or that he could impress on his memory a train of new names, and of particular numbers, in the course of a verbal recitation.

It may be obviously observed, that in preparing these lectures for the press, such statements as have been mentioned above, might have been subjoined either in the text, or by the way of notes; but Dr. Young with great propriety reserved them for the second volume, which will be noticed in the sequel.—Let us now take a nearer view of the contents of the first volume, or at least of some parts of it; for the uniformity of style supersedes the necessity, and the limits of our publication renders it impracticable, to follow this author step by step throughout his extensive work.

It has been frequently observed, that most of the primary notions of philosohpy, and such as may seem to be the simplest, are the most difficult to be explained with verbal precision, or with complete satisfaction. The reason may probably depend upon the want of simpler ideas, by the combination of which, the desired explanation may be effected. On this account it frequently happens, that the comprehension of a particular subject is rendered much more intricate and perplexed by the very same length of illustration, which is intended for its complete elucidation. Dr. Young's definition of Motion in the second lecture is ingenious; and, had he left it insulated, the slightest attention on the part of the reader, might have compensated for the exceptionable part of its general application. "Motion, (he says,) therefore, is the change of rectilinear distance between two points." He then proceeds to observe, "that two points are necessary to constitute motion; that in all cases when we are inquiring "whether or no any body or any point is in motion, we must "recur to some point which we can compare with it, and "that if a single atom existed alone in the Universe, it could "neither be said to be in motion, nor at rest."

It may be easily perceived, that the original definition of motion is sufficiently satisfactory, but that the subsequent part, together with a great deal more, which we might have transcribed, seems to involve the mind of a novice in a cloud of doubt and perplexity.---The like observation might also be applied to some other definitions.

The seventh lecture, on Pressure and Equilibrium, is peculiarly well executed; the difference between pressure and momentum (an abstruse subject) being pointed out as well as the present state of knowledge seems to admit of. The simple mechanical powers are likewise briefly and clearly explained in the latter part of the same lecture.

The tenth and the eleventh lectures are some of those which treat of subjects unusual in a course of philosophical lectures. The former treats of Drawing, Writing, and Measuring;—the

latter, of Modelling, Perspective, Engraving, and Painting. But though those subjects are treated in a concise, and sometimes in a superficial manner; yet they furnish good examples of the application of mechanics, and serve, at the same time, to relieve the mind from the continual attention to theoretical precepts. Nearly the same observations are applicable to the fourteenth lecture, wherein the principles of architecture and carpentry are explained, and to the seventeenth, which describes the construction of chronometers, or time-keepers, giving an account of their gradual improvements, and their peculiar merits.

The twentieth lecture, which contains a concise history of Mechanics, and concludes the first grand division under the name of *Mechanics*, is peculiarly well adapted to the inclination of general readers.

There is a competition,—a sort of rivalship, among human beings, which renders them extremely fond of personal anecdotes. The unusual actions, whether laudable or blameable, of other individuals,—their prosperity, or their misfortunes, seldom fail to excite interest and curiosity; for by a natural application to ourselves, our satisfaction, our emulation, our caution, or our astonishment, is called forth, whence new actions frequently arise. In scientific histories, where theoretical or practical subjects are connected with personal anecdotes, the latter, by a natural connexion of ideas, help to impress the former on the mind of the hearer. Thus the idea of burning-glasses generally suggests the remembrance of Archimedes, and Proclus, who are said to have burned the vessels of their enemies by means of reflectors. Thus also the name of Newton is scarcely separable from the idea of the general gravitation of matter.

Dr. Young begins his lecture with the origin of Grecian learning in Egypt, and then proceeds to mention the Ionian and the Italian schools, Pythagoras, Democritus, Archytas, Aristotle, Epicurus, Archimedes, Vitruvius, Bacon, Galileo,

Napier, Newton, Hooke, &c. down to the most modern philosophers, mathematicians, and mechanics. The sketch is concise, but regular and instructive. A short table is placed at the end of the lecture, exhibiting the names of the above-mentioned, and other ingenious persons, with the periods in which they lived, after the manner of Priestley's biographical table.—A similar appendage is added to each of the other historical lectures.—From this twentieth lecture the following paragraphs are transcribed as a specimen of this author's style.

"In the midst of an age of darkness, an insulated individual "arrests our attention, by merits of no ordinary kind. Roger "Bacon was born at Ilchester, in the year 1214: it is well known "that his experiments had led him to a discovery of the properties "of gunpowder, although he humanely concealed the nature of its "composition from the public, and described it only in an enigma. "The extent of his optical knowledge has been variously estimated, "but it was unquestionably much greater than that of the ancient "philosophers. He appears, however, to have had some com-"panions in his mechanical pursuits; he declares that he had seen "chariots which could move with incredible rapidity, without the "help of animals; he describes a diving bell: and he says that he "had been informed, on good authority, that machines had been "made, by the assistance of which men might fly through the "air. Cimabue, who first began to revive the long neglected art "of painting, was contemporary with Bacon. The use of oil in "painting is commonly supposed to have been introduced by "Van Eyck; but there are traces in the records of this country, "of its employment as early as the year 1239."

"The clepsydræ, or water timekeepers of the ancients, ap-"pear to have been gradually transformed, in the middle ages, "into the clocks of the Saracens, and of the Arabians; and these "were introduced into Europe in the thirteenth century. About "the year 1290, turret-clocks were erected at Westminster, and at "Canterbury. The first clock, of which we know the construc-"tion, is that which was made by Wallingford in 1326, and which "was regulated by a fly; and the second that of Defondeur, or "Fusorius, with a simple balance, made about 1400.---But it "appears that some portable watches had been constructed in the "beginning of the fourteenth century; and about the year 1460, "several clock-makers are said to have come to England from "Flanders."

"The art of engraving on metal, and of printing with the rol-
"ling press, is supposed to have been invented in the year 1423.
"Some attribute the art of printing with types to Laurentius
"Coster, of Haerlem, who, as they say, in 1430, employed for the
"purpose separate blocks of wood, tied together with thread.
"Gensfleich, one of his workmen, went to Mentz, and was there
"assisted by Gutenberg, who invented types of metal. But the
"best authors appear to disbelieve this story; and Gutenberg, in
"partnership with Fust, and Schoeffer, is the first that is univer-
"sally allowed to have practised the art. It was introduced into
"this country by William Caxton."

"Leonardo da Vinci, the most accomplished man of his age,
"was born about the year 1443, and excelled not only in painting
"and poetry, but also in architecture, mathematics, and mechanics.
"The state of practical mechanics in this and the subsequent cen-
"turies may be estimated from Ramelli's collection of machines,
"which contains several curious and useful inventions; some of
"them long since forgotten, and even lately proposed again
"as new."

"The works of Bacon, Lord Verulam, although not immedi-
"ately tending to the advancement of mathematics or mechanics,
"are universally allowed to have conduced very materially to the
"improvement of every branch of science, by the introduction of
"a correct and conclusive method of philosophical arrangement
"and inquiry. Guido Ubaldi published, in 1577, a treatise on
"mechanics, not wholly exempt from inaccuracies; and in the fol-
"lowing year, a valuable commentary on the works of Archimedes:
"some of the properties of projectiles were about the same time
"rather imagined than demonstrated by Tortalez: Benedetti soon
"after began to reason correctly respecting the principles of me-
"chanics; but it was reserved for Galileo to lay the foundations
"of the discoveries, which have succeeded each other with increa-
"sing rapidity for more than two centuries. He investigated, in
"the year 1589, the laws of accelerating forces, and shewed the
"nature of the curve which is described by a projectile: he infer-
"red from observation the isochronism of the vibrations of a pen-
"dulum, and the principle was soon after applied by Sanctorius
"to the regulation of timekeepers. Stevinus, a Dutchman, was
"the first that clearly stated the important law by which the equi-
"librium of any three forces is determined: and the properties
"of the centre of gravity were successively investigated by Lucas
"Valerius, Lafaille, and Guldinus, who made some additions to
"the elegant propositions of Archimedes which relate to it."

Should it be asked, which of the lectures of the second di-
vision seem to be written with more particular attention, an

answer might be given in favour of the lectures on optics. Dr. Young seems to have bestowed peculiar labour on the study of that branch of natural philosophy : for one ma y easily discover new hints, new lights, and new explanations, in those optical lectures.—In treating of the theories of optics, Dr. Young does not seem to give that satisfaction which the reader might be led to expect. But this defect, which could hardly be avoided in the lectures, is compensated by certain papers on that subject, which were first published in the philosophical transactions of the Royal Society, and which are reprinted in the second volume of the present work.

The lectures on Sound may well claim the rank next to those on optics; yet some of them, and especially the thirty-third, which treats of *harmonics*, are rather in want of a more methodical arrangement, or a more detailed explanation. In their present state, they are not easily comprehended without repeated and attentive perusals; and of course could have been much less understood when delivered verbally. The twenty lectures of the last division, under the general title of Physics, embrace a variety of subjects, the most important of which are treated more at large, whilst others are explained in a more summary way, and some are little more than barely mentioned.

After a general view of the first volume of the work, which is at present under consideration, it would be both useless and improper to enter into a particular examination, or to attempt to censure any part of it; for, since those lectures were compiled for the purpose of giving a superficial, yet extended, view of the modern state of philosophical knowledge, a severe examiner might easily find occasion to criticize the exceptionable part of almost every subject, that is mentioned in the course.—He might remark, that several propositions are destitute of demonstration ; that a great many explanations are either too intricate, or not sufficiently illustrated by means of examples; he might call in question certain theories, and

point out a variety of defective statements; which, however, seem intended to be as they are, for the purpose of avoiding minutiæ, that can hardly ever be remembered when heard in a lecture-room, or, if remembered, can seldom be of use to the hearer, who cannot possibly expect to become fully informed of a subject without farther study, or more particular application. It will, for instance, suffice for a lecturer to say, that a heavy body, dropped from a little altitude above the surface of the earth, will descend through 16 feet, in the first second of time, and this may be easily remembered. Yet such statement may be censured as being incorrect; for, the space abovementioned is a little longer than 16 feet. Its proper length, according to the nearest approximation of experimental investigation, being 16·087 feet; but the additional decimal fraction of 0·087 is neither easily remembered, nor, when remembered, is of any great importance to a superficial learner.

The only question which might deserve discussion, is whether, in a course of lectures, it would be better thoroughly to explain and to illustrate the very first principles of a subject, without advancing a great way into it; or to give an enlarged, but superficial, view of every branch of the same. And though, at first sight, it may appear indifferent whether the one or the other of those plans be adopted; yet a slight consideration of the object for which the course of lectures is intended, will easily point out the plan to which the preference ought to be given.—Scientific lectures in general are delivered either to academies, colleges, and seminaries, of various kinds, in which, young persons are educated; or in towns, to a promiscuous company, of all ages and descriptions. The attendance of the former may be justly considered as professional students, who, being intended for the law, for physic, or for any other department, must be initiated into those branches of knowledge, which are more or less immediately subservient to their intended professions. And in this case

it is evident that a proper and full explanation of the rudiments of a science is absolutely necessary; for upon this firm foundation, the superstructure of the whole subject must be raised in the mind of the learner. But to a mixt company, whose members either wish to be amused for a short time, or desire to acquire a slight notion of a science, without giving themselves any farther trouble about it, the only particulars, which can with propriety be delivered, are the most useful definitions, and such more prominent parts of a subject as may make a greater impression in the hearer's mind, without fatiguing his attention.

Dr. Young, in his lectures, has often steered a middle course between the two abovementioned plans. In general, however, he has leaned with considerable inclination towards the extended and the superficial mode, which, upon every consideration, seems to have been judiciously adapted to the company for which his lectures were intended.

The second volume of this work consists of 738 pages, and it may well be considered as a performance in great measure distinct from the first. The only thing which they have in common, is a copious index at the end of the second volume, which refers to the materials of both the volumes.

In a short preface, with which this volume commences, Dr. Young briefly mentions the nature of the contents, and adds a few necessary observations relative to their use. Those contents are of three different kinds, unconnected with each other; though they are all belonging to the subject of natural philosophy, and the mathematics, together with the arts depending upon them. The first 86 pages contain the mathematical elements of natural philosophy. After these, the principal part of the volume, (viz.) as far as page 520 contains a methodical catalogue of references, a most elaborate and most useful performance. The rest of the volume contains miscellaneous papers upon subjects of natural philosophy, and an

index for the whole work.—Of those parts it is now necessary to give a more particular, or a more satisfactory account.

From the small number of pages in which the mathematical elements of natural philosophy are contained, the reader is naturally led to expect a most compendious or condensed statement of the same, and his expectation will not be disappointed; for they were originally intended to serve as a syllabus to the lectures, and for that purpose they were first published by themselves in a small octavo volume: but on being reprinted in the present work, they have been augmented by the addition both of elementary matter, and of original investigations.

"These elements (Dr. Young says) are perfectly independent "of every other work introductory to any branch of the mathe- "matics, and they comprehend all the propositions which are re- "quired for forming a complete series of demonstrations, leading to "every case of importance that occurs in natural philosophy, with "the exception of some of the more intricate calculations of astro- "nomy."

These elements are divided into three parts; each of which is subdivided into several sections; and were it possible thoroughly to explain the principles of the subjects which are treated of, within the limits in which those sections are contained, the performance might be justly considered as a most extraordinary, and a most useful production. But upon a careful examination, an impartial reader will easily discover the standard of their real value, which by no means renders them independent of any other elementary work.—In their present state, it would be difficult to determine the class of readers, to whom these elements might prove acceptable. Too laconic and too abstruse for mere beginners, too short for proficients, and too imperfect for those who would study the subject with care and attention; they are, nevertheless, curiously expressed, and contain several neat demonstrations, together with a variety of other useful particulars; but they

are in want of considerable addition and alteration, before they may be considered as a complete compendium of natural philosophy. Upon this plan, which is not unlike Jones's *Synopsis Palmariorum Matheseôs*, with the addition of a detached explanatory volume, a most useful work might be compiled, which would have the double advantage of serving as a concise remembrancer to proficients; and, with the assistance of the explanatory volume, as an elementary work for collegial students. The abovementioned Mr. Jones might with propriety have affixed to his Synopsis (which by the bye is a most curious performance) the motto, *Dum brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio.* His son, the late Sir William Jones, famous for his Oriental knowledge, was so impressed with the truth of this observation, that, before he had any expectation of going to India, he intended to apply himself to the study of the mathematics and philosophy, principally for the purpose of writing an explanation of, or key to, his father's Synopsis.

The sections of the elements, which are the object of our immediate consideration, though greatly compressed, and in some measure imperfect, are not, however, all equally so; and in proof of this, a section of the most contracted or imperfect, and another of the best kind, may now be pointed out. As an instance of the former, we may examine the second section of the first part, which treats *of the Comparison of variable Quantities.*

This section contains three definitions; six theorems relative to the doctrine of, or principally for finding, fluxions; and lastly, an algebraical problem; namely, a very concise idea of the method of solving numerical equations by approximation. This author would perhaps have done much better, if, instead thereof, he had stated the nature of proportional equations, by shewing how those equations are affected by the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, of variable or invariable quantities; which is a subject very useful to beginners, and

which is, at the same time, susceptible of being sufficiently explained in a very narrow compass.

The seventh section of the second part, which treats *of Pressure and Equilibrium*, may be considered as one of the best. Amongst other particulars, it describes the mechanical powers in a short, indeed, but elegant, manner. The ninth, likewise, *on the Equilibrium and Strength of elastic Substances*, deserves particular notice, as it contains a considerable quantity of original matter.

The methodical catalogue of references, which follows the abovementioned elements, cannot be too much admired or praised. The disposition of the materials, the accuracy of the statements, the numerous works to which it refers, the elegant manner in which the results of various experimental enquiries and observations are condensed in tables, or formulæ, or otherwise, and the impartial statement of opinions or theories, are strong marks of an industrious, persevering, and extensively informed mind.

The use of this part of Dr. Young's work is not confined to any particular kind of students. The novice will be directed by it in the choice of his books relative to any particular branch of philosophical, mechanical, or mathematical knowledge:—the proficient will be enabled to see how far any subject has been advanced, and what books he must examine for that purpose. But his enquiry is often sufficiently satisfied, and the necessity of more elaborate researches is superseded by a concise but satisfactory statement of the subject in question; for it is scarcely possible to open this catalogue at random, without meeting with a variety of those useful and compendious statements.—But let us now take a nearer view of those particulars.

The contents of the catalogue of references, or the titles of its numerous divisions, are expressed in a table of a peculiar nature, which is prefixed to it. In this table, the dependence of one subject upon another, or the branches of the principal

subjects, are distinguished by means of long lines or brackets, so that a particular subject may be readily found out, without the necessity of running along the whole table. Thus, if it be required to find out the authors who have written upon escapements of time-keepers, the enquirer will in the first place look for the principal article, *Mechanics in general*, to which the article in question obviously belongs. This embraces, in a long bracket, several subordinate heads, and among them there is, *Practical Mechanics*, which comprehends several inferior titles, one of which is, *Time-keepers in general.* This comprehends other titles, one of which is, *Parts of a Time-keeper*, and among those parts will be found *Escapement*, which refers the reader to page 193 of the catalogue for the desired information.

With respect to the disposition of the materials, Dr. Young expresses himself in the following manner:

"The catalogue of references has been methodically subdivided, "as far as it was possible to do it with convenience and accuracy, "and the works and passages belonging to each subdivision, have "in general been arranged in chronological order; except that "the different productions of the same author have been placed "together. The divisions of the catalogue follow very nearly the "same order as the text of the lectures, so that there has been no "occasion for any references from one to the other."

The number of works which the reader is referred to, differs, as must be naturally expected, according to the subject. Thus, in the instance which has been mentioned above, under the title of *Escapement*, in page 193, there will be found twenty-one different works which treat of escapements. Thus also under the title of *Machines for raising Water, Pumps, Fire-engines, and Fountains*, you will find about 190 works mentioned. It is not only to works written expressly, and entirely, on the particular subjects, that the reader is referred to; but likewise to particular parts of general and periodical publications; such as to transactions of learned societies, to magazines, journals, &c.

"In the mathematical, (Dr. Young says,) and astronomical "parts, all references to the transactions of foreign societies have "in general been omitted: partly because they would have been "too numerous for insertion, and partly because they may be found "at large in the copious works of Murhard and of Reuss. The "references to periodical publications have been continued, where "it was possible, to the beginning of the year 1805."

The statements of experiments, observations, theories, &c. that are intermixed with the other particulars of this catalogue, deserve particular notice; and it will now be necessary to point out some of those that are more remarkable. They are so very numerous, that, if collected, they would form a pretty well-sized volume. They are unquestionably very useful, especially because they are compendiously expressed, in consequence of which they may be easily remembered. And it must be acknowledged, that Dr. Young possesses great powers of epitomizing and condensing.

The first remarkable article that occurs, is an epitome of the principal attempts and experiments that have been made for the purpose of establishing Standards of Measures, together with the statement of English, Scotch, French, and other foreign measures, both ancient and modern. These have been extracted from the most authentic sources, and the names of the authors, or experimenters, are annexed to the account. The accuracy of the numerical expressions is likewise deserving commendation.

Similar to this essay (as it may be properly called) on Measures, is the essay on Weights, under the title of *Standard Weights*, in page 160 and following.

The division which is intitled *Sources of Motion*, is subdivided into the following heads, viz. *Animal Mechanics; Animal Force; Immediate Force of Men; Performance of Men by Machines; Force of Horses*; *Work of Mules;* and *Inanimate Force*. And in those divisions, besides the references, the reader will find the statements themselves; so that, un-

less any one wish to examine the authors themselves for any very particular purpose, he need not take any farther trouble; for the abovementioned statements are clearly and accurately expressed, so as to afford complete satisfaction.

The division on *Friction*, which follows the above, contains an elegant abstract of Coulomb's memoir on Friction.

The reader will be enabled to form a better idea of the manner in which Dr. Young expresses the result of experiments, by the following specimen, which has been transcribed from page 185:

> "*From the Journals of the Royal Institution. Extract from "a Memoir of M. Labillardière, on the Strength of the "Fibres of the Flax of New Zealand. Read before the "National Institute. B. Soc. Phil. n.* 75.
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> "This flax, the *phormium tenax*, was procured from the inhabitants of New Zealand, by M. Labillardière himself, in the voyage he made in search of La Peyrouse.
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> "In these experiments particular care was taken to employ substances of a diameter as equable as possible throughout their lengths. The inferences are, that the strength of the fibres of the great aloe, *agave Americana*, being equal to 7, that of common flax is represented by $11\frac{3}{4}$; that of hemp by $16\frac{1}{3}$; that of the flax of New Zealand by $23\frac{5}{11}$; and that of silk by 34. If we call the strength of the flax 1000, that of the aloe will be 596, of hemp 1390, of the phormium 1996, and of silk 2894.
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> "The degree of extension of these fibres, before they break, is in a different proportion. Supposing it 1 for flax, it is 2 for hemp, 3 for the flax of New Zealand, 5 for the agave, and 10 for silk. It is well known, that the strength of cords depends as well on their elasticity, as on the ultimate force required to break them.
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> "The experiments and reflections of M. Labillardière, shew beyond contradiction, that many advantages may be obtained from the cultivation of this flax on a large scale; and that it may be attempted with a prospect of success in the southern parts of France."

A list of elegant and useful particulars, contained in this part of the work, might be protracted to an immense length, but it will be sufficient to add one specimen more of this author's style; which gives an account of experiments and ob-

servations on the height of falling or shooting stars; by Benzenberg and Brandes.

"They were observed, (he says,) from a base of 46200 feet F. or "2 German geographical miles, 15 of which make a degree: their "height was from 4 to 30 of those miles; the mean height about "11, or near 50 English miles; the velocity of two of them was "from 4 to 6 miles, or about 22 English miles in a second. One "was brighter than Jupiter, and was 450 miles distant.

"In the second paper Dr. Benzenberg gives two instances in "detail.—September 15. A shooting star of the fifth magnitude. "Elevation of the beginning 7,7 geographical miles: of the end "8,2. Length of the path, 1,5 miles. Longitude of the place "of disappearance 28° 3′. Latitude 53° 22′. Observed by Bran- "des, in Ekwarden, and Benzenberg, in Ham, near Hamburgh: "length of the base 14 miles.—October 3. Another of the fourth "magnitude observed by the same persons. The termination 7,1 "geographical miles above the earth. Longitude 27° 7′; lat. "53° 5′. These observations shew, says Dr. Benzenberg, that a "long base will furnish as accurate a comparison as a shorter one; "that even meteors of the fourth and fifth magnitude, may be seen "at places distant above 14 geographical miles from each other; "and they confirm the former observations made at Gottingen with "a base of but one or two miles. Dr. Pottgiesser, in Elberfeld, "40 miles distant from Hamburgh, saw a meteor on the 2d of Oc- "tober, in the zenith, which appears to have been the same as was "seen at Hamburgh in the horizon; its height is estimated at 25 "German miles. It was intended to continue these observations "with unremitting assiduity."

The eleven papers, which follow the catalogue of references, had all been published before, principally in the Philoso hical Transactions; but in the present volume they have been reprinted with various corrections.

The first paper, under the title of *Observations upon Vision*, treats of the manner in which the eye accommodates itself to view objects distinctly at different distances:—a subject which has exercised the ingenuity of the most able physiologists. Dr. Young, in the first place, briefly describes the theories, or hypotheses, of Kepler, Descartes, De la Hire, Dr. Pemberton, Dr. Potterfield, Dr. Jurin, Musschenbrock, and others; then subjoins the account of his discovery relative to the construction of the crystalline lens of the eye of the ox, and gives a minute

description of that lens: upon which he establishes his theory of the accommodation of the eye for distinct vision of objects placed at different distances. In the latter part of the paper, this author answers the following queries: 1st, What is the cause of the lateral radiation which seems to adhere to a candle viewed with winking eyes? 2d, Whence arises that luminous cross, which seems to proceed from the image of a candle in a looking-glass? 3d, Why do sparks appear to be emitted when the eye is rubbed or compressed in the dark? But the statement of the abovementioned theory, and the answers to the three queries, cannot be rendered intelligible, without the previous description of the crystalline lens; but the insertion of the whole in the present account would protract it to too great a length.—A plate is annexed to this paper, which exhibits a vertical section of the ox's eye, and the structure of the crystalline, with a side-view of the same.

The title of the second paper is, *Outlines of Experiments and Enquiries respecting Sound and Light.* Those particulars are arranged in sixteen divisions, and the experiments, and the deductions from those experiments, as they are described in the sections, though not always conclusive, are, however, very ingenious, and most of them are deserving of farther attention. —Five copper-plate engravings, with a variety of figures, belong to this paper.

Of the contents of the remaining papers, it is not practicable to give a concise and satisfactory account.

The last article of the work is an ample and accurate index, which occupies not less than 56 pages, and refers to both volumes. By the assistance of this index, the present work, which contains an immense variety of particulars, is rendered nearly equivalent to a philosophical dictionary.

The preceding account may probably be presumed to give the reader a pretty just idea of Dr. Young's present work, an examination of which has here been humbly attempted. But should a more definite statement of its merit be demanded in a

few words, a satisfactory answer might perhaps be given by saying, that Doctor Young's two volumes, intitled *A Course of Lectures*, &c. form rather a collection of that author's different works, than a uniform or homogeneous performance; nor can it be denied, that the execution of the different parts exhibits a considerable inequality. But taking it altogether, it must undoubtedly be considered as being a very ample, an elaborate, an accurate, and a most useful, repository of Natural Philosophy in its present state, as well as of several collateral branches of knowledge.

POEMS, NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED. BY THE REV. WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES.—12*mo. pp.* 197. *Cadell and Davies, London.* 1809.

IT is generally believed, that Fashion is most despotic in those countries, where the greatest progress has been made towards civilization and refinement. This is not the case. In the wilds of Africa, on the frozen mountains of Lapland, over those vast and solitary plains, where the Arab and Tartar roam, in those regions where the human mind dozes under the narcotic influence of Mohammedan power,—wherever, indeed, barbarism and ignorance prevail, Fashion reigns with absolute dominion; and the laws, which she established some thousand years ago, are still observed with religious reverence. The slightest attempt at innovation is regarded with horror, and the abolition or alteration of the most trivial custom, which Fashion has consecrated, might cause the revolution of empires. But as the light of reason becomes diffused, and arts and sciences begin to be cultivated, the sanctity of peculiar modes, to which antiquity had imparted an appearance of inviolability, is gradually invaded; till at length

the modes themselves fall into contempt or oblivion. Fashion then gives place to Variety. Whatever may be employed for the use, the comfort, or the amusement of man, is subjected to eternal change of form and nature, as caprice, the desire of improvement, or the mere love of novelty may operate: and in the end, where refinement is carried to excess, things are esteemed not for their intrinsic excellence or beauty, but as they may be strange or novel.

Nor is the influence of this passion for novelty, confined to the mere modification of matter, but extends to the operations of the mind. The wing of Fancy grows weary in the eccentric flights, which it makes through unexplored regions in quest of objects, that may gratify the sickly taste of Variety: and the fields of Poesy are cultivated not according to the best fashion, but the newest whim: crop follows crop in a wild, irregular, and fantastic succession; a strange mixture of flowers and weeds, so intimately blended and entangled as mutually to support and shade each other.

It has fared with Poetry, indeed, much in the same way that it has with Landscape-gardening, as it is called. When the rude form of Nature first began to be subjected to cultivation, man was too intent on satisfying his immediate wants, to be studious of ornament, or anxious after beauty: but as soon as his necessities were supplied, (at least as soon as they were supplied so easily as to allow any respite from labour,) the activity of his mind was employed in devising modes of improvement and embellishment, and in inventing means of adding grace to utility. A considerable time must necessarily have elapsed, before any just principles of taste could have been established; but it is not probable, that at first any very great deviations would be made from the primitive simplicity of Nature: whatever defects there might be, they would be the defects of poverty, and not of superfluity: fastidious delicacy might be displeased at the plainness or scantiness of the garb, but would not be disgusted by the incumbrance of overloaded

and incongruous ornament. There is, however, every reason to suppose, that by the natural tendency of the human mind to prefer that which is right, when not warped by any powerful motive to lean to that which is wrong, a just perception of propriety and beauty must have prevailed, till the love of novelty exchanged beauty for deformity; and gave birth to all those monstrous productions, which were as much admired in their own time, as they are ridiculed in the present.—The gloomy rectilinear avenue; the sombre yew, tortured into walls and columns, and a thousand extravagant and frightful forms,

Gorgons and hydras and chimæras dire;

the fountains with their clumsy tritons and porpoise-like naiads; and indeed the whole tribe of pagan deities, in lead or bronze; the trim parterre, formal, hard, and dry, cut and divided into all possible forms, with as much minuteness and precision, as if they were intended for diagrams to illustrate geometrical problems; the trumpery of Chinese temples and bridges; and the more modern barbarisms of clumps and knolls, and belts, and tiresome serpentines: all of these as they deviate more or less from the direct path of simplicity and nature, are not proofs that the right way was not previously known, but that it was wilfully left, in search of variety: for the right way was plain and open, and straight forward, and all those, who have first wandered from it, have been compelled to make paths for themselves, with great labour and difficulty, through obstructions which opposed them at every step, and thickened as they proceeded.

If the various changes which at different periods have taken place in the style or fashion of Poetry are considered, they will be found to have occurred nearly in the same order, and indeed to have accompanied these revolutions in Landscape-gardening: and the cause of this is obvious; both are subjects

of taste; and as that varies from correctness to formality, from formality to meanness, and from meanness to extravagance, both must be equally affected. But the present state of these arts, while it shews their intimate analogy, will demonstrate how little the principles of taste are even now understood or cultivated; or at least will prove what was said above, and what cannot be too often repeated, nor too much deprecated, that though the charms of beauty, grace, and propriety, may be most powerfully felt and acknowledged, they are constantly sacrificed, without remorse, to variety. So that while one party of poets and landscape-gardeners, from an excessive admiration of simplicity and *picturesqueness*, are stripping Nature bare, or covering her with the coarse rags, which she had worn in her days of poverty, and had long since thrown aside; another set are tricking her out in all the fantastic gewgaws that capricious fancy can invent, and hiding her completely under a load of meretricious ornaments. These may be called Nature's man-milliners; for, as if they were insensible to her own beauties, they are only attentive to plait her frills, and dispose her drapery. Both these parties, however, cannot be right: it is certain, indeed, that prosecuting their systems to extremes, both are wrong; though not in an equal degree, since the nakedness of Nature is less offensive than the distortions of Art. But it is evident that though the effects are so diametrically opposite, they are produced by the same cause,—an insatiate passion for variety.

Now though the makers of poems are very apt occasionally to affect a good deal of carelessness for the opinion of their contemporaries, and talk of reserving their beauties for the admiration of other times, this is only to be understood as poetical coquetry: they understand very well the value of popular favour, and practise every art to obtain it. Instead, therefore, of endeavouring to direct the public taste, which it is their business to do, they study its prevailing tendency only in order to fashion their works accordingly: they are

afraid to climb against the wheel, and seek eminence by arresting its progress; they think it easier to reach the summit by yielding to its motion, and suffering themselves to be raised by it; and in this conclusion perhaps they are right, but it is certain that the next rotation precipitates them in the dust.

Public opinion, indeed, may be said to be the market of poetry, and those therefore, who have wares to dispose of, will study its fluctuations; and if they have not capital to command or regulate them, they will be careful to manufacture such articles only as are most in request, and fetch the best prices. Some dashing speculators, by the introduction of a novel manufacture, may obtain a temporary monopoly, but as soon as the novelty ceases, the trade becomes open again. There must, however, be in this, as in all other merchandize, wholesale dealers, who traffic only in one particular branch, and retailers who keep as it were a chandler's shop of poetry; and these, if they do nothing to improve the public taste, at least do nothing to corrupt it, since they only follow in a path already made for them by hardier adventurers.

It may be thought perhaps, that these observations are rather applicable to the general state of Poetry, than to the work of any single writer: but it is presumed that on a nearer view of the productions of Mr. Bowles, they will not be found altogether out of place, or superfluous: since there is scarcely any species of poetry, which he has not attempted, nor any of the modes which others have rendered fashionable for the day, that he has not partly adopted. He has composed Sonnets, Elegies, and Monodies, Odes, Ballads, Descriptive Poems, and non-descripts of all sorts and sizes, from five pages to five books; and has by turns been plaintive, incomprehensible, simple, gawdy, and extravagant. He does not indeed fall a whimpering over a fading rose, nor become hysterically lyrical at the sight of an old woman in a red cloak; neither does he go quite so far as to manufacture the clouds into gauze, nor, when he leaps upon his poetical hobby-horse, prac-

tise tumbler's tricks to shew the steadiness of his poise, and his fearlessness of vertigo. It was to avoid singularity perhaps, that he complied with the fashion of the hour so far as he has done; but he still is comparatively a plain man, and not enough in the height of the mode to be noticed on that account alone. Had he carried his compliance much farther, he would certainly have attracted much more of the popular gaze; had he not complied so far, he would have allowed much freer exercise to those poetical powers which he undoubtedly possesses; and would not have frittered away their energies in an endless search after variety.

Mr. Bowles has at various times given to the public, one by one, four volumes of poems; and though judgment has already been passed on the three first, and the last, therefore, which has only just now appeared, is the more immediate object of consideration; yet it seems but justice, in weighing his merits as a poet, to take into the scale his former productions: at least, liberal judges will not object to this proceeding since its object is to shew that Mr. Bowles has more genius and talent than those who only read his last volume would give him credit for. His first volume undoubtedly contains the best of his works, his last the worst; and as in this he professes to have 'closed his book for ever,' there is no room to hope that he will redeem the reputation he may lose by not having closed it sooner. His poetical character then must be determined by what is already before the public, and it would be unfair not to give him the advantage of all that may tend towards its support or elevation.

It is not intended, however, here to enter into a specification of the particular merits of the author's former volumes, or a minute examination of their defects: they have been for many years open to public investigation, and it were an ill compliment to Mr. Bowles to suppose that they have excited no curiosity: if they have not, it is too late to think of awakening it now; and if they have, their merits or defects remain not

to be discovered. It will be sufficient for the purpose proposed, to take such a general view only as may serve to shew what are the most prominent and characteristic features of the writer's genius.

Whoever contemplates the works of this author, must be forcibly struck with the strain of deep melancholy that pervades them. For this he has very ingenuously accounted in a short introduction prefixed to his first volume, with the intention of obviating "the common remark on melancholy poetry, that it has been very often gravely composed, when possibly the heart of the writer had very little share in the distress he chose to describe." But he adds, "There is a great difference between *natural* and *fabricated* feelings, even in poetry;" and he leaves those readers, "who have felt sensations of sorrow, to judge to which of these two characters his poems belong." Now, in fact, the public has no right to enquire whether the sorrows which a poet chooses to describe, be imaginary, or real; it is enough that they are described naturally, and that they excite sympathy in the reader. But it is not quite so certain that a poet may be allowed to give vent, on all occasions, to his 'personal feelings,' however afflicting may be the cause which agitates and depresses his spirit. It may be questioned even whether by this self-violation of the sacredness of his sorrows, he does not subject himself to the imputation of querulousness: and readers who are impatient of complaint, may be apt to apply to him the sarcastic lines of Cowper, respecting those nervous valetudinarians, who are eternally reciting the history of their disorders;

> '*I thought I should have died, I was so bad,*
> '*The peevish hearers almost wish you had.*'

There is undoubtedly a vast difference between a melancholy description of objects not in themselves melancholy, and such a selection of images as, from their nature or their associations,

are calculated to excite that class of sensations, which may be termed poetical melancholy. In one case, you see with the poet's eye only, in the other with your own. A man, labouring under a deep depression of spirits, sickens at the sight of pleasure, he views every thing with a jaundiced eye, and a scene of the gayest merriment presents to his mind nothing but the most gloomy reflection: he anticipates the reverse of the scene, and laments the instability of all sublunary enjoyment. He casts his misty mantle before the brightest landscape, and they, who contemplate it through that medium, behold every object dim, shadowy, cheerless and distorted. The poems of Collins and of Ossian induce a pleasing melancholy in the reader, by the pensive colouring which they give to images naturally of a still and sober sort; but these poets would have broken the spell of their enchantment, if they had officiously obtruded their own sorrows on the reader. From the moment that a poem is opened, the author should be lost sight of; if the reader's mind is left sufficiently unoccupied to think about him, the poem must be void of interest: but if the author forces himself on his notice, he wilfully foregoes the advantage he might have gained by keeping himself in the back-ground, and if he does not entirely destroy the interest he may have excited, he undoubtedly weakens it by distracting the reader's attention, and dividing it between the fabric and the architect.

It may be considered as no small evidence of the poetical powers of Mr. Bowles, that, notwithstanding this defect runs through almost the whole of his productions, and acts as a drawback upon their interest, the mild light of his genius still attracts and preserves attention. It is easy to discover, that he is a very accurate observer of nature, and it will be readily admitted, that he selects his images with the most delicate taste; his language is, in general, highly poetical, his versification harmonious, and a strain of pure and tender sentiment pervades the whole. His first publication displayed these qualities in a very eminent degree, and entitled him to an elevated rank

among elegiac poets and writers of sonnets: his succeeding effusions have rather tended to shake the foundation of his fame than to support it.

If invention indeed, as it is the noblest and sublimest part of the poetical character, were considered absolutely indispensable in all, who presume to range the fields of Poesy, Mr. Bowles, on a severe examination, perhaps, might be found a trepasser; since to invention, in its strict and proper sense, he has very slight pretensions. But a law of this sort, if rigidly enforced, would affect the claims of many writers, who have been long regarded as the chief ornaments of poetry, and to call in question whose title to such distinction, would be deemed a sort of sacrilege offered to the divinity of the Muse. There is no doubt, however, that a writer, who delineates natural objects faithfully, and colours them with delicacy, has a fair claim to the rank of a poet, though not in the highest degree; as the delineator of landscape or still-life on canvas, is a painter, though of an order inferior to the painter of history. On entering into a more particular examination of the volume now immediately under review, it will be proper to consider Mr. Bowles rather attentively in this point of view.

There is scarcely any one of his compositions, in which he has not displayed his sensibility to the graces of nature, and the correctness and vividness of the impression which they leave on his fancy. The following short passage shews the habitual disposition of his mind:

——— "Still mine eye
"Sought every charm of nature; every light
"That deck'd her forests, and each ev'ning scene,
"When west away the crimson clouds were hung,
"Seem'd like a tender thought." P. 80.

Many highly-finished descriptions are to be found even in this last volume, which is so inferior to the author's former productions: but it is in delicate and passing allusions to picturesque objects, in those graceful and seemingly careless touches

of the pencil, that he is most eminently successful. Of this description are the following passages in his poem, intitled 'The Sylph of Summer:'—

"The winds too are thy subjects; from the breeze,
"That like a child upon a holiday
"On the high mountain's van pursues the down
"Of the grey thistle, ere the autumnal shower
"Steals soft and mars his pastime; to the king
"Of hurricanes, that sounds his mighty shell,
"And bids TORNADO sweep the Western world." P. 100.

——— "Soft daughter of the AIR,
"SYLPH OF THE SUMMER, come! the silent shower
"Is past, and 'mid the dripping fern, the wren
"Peeps, till the sun looks through the clouds again."
P. 127.

The author's chief defect, as a descriptive poet, is minuteness. He enters too much into detail; he delineates faithfully the various parts, which properly combined, produce a beautiful picture, but he labours every part equally, and wants the power of combination: so that he may be said to be rather a painter of causes than of effects; and though this may be very good philosophy, it is bad poetry. A number of images, however beautiful in themselves, unless disposed with judgment and effect, will not form a poem, any more than a number of solo parts, thrown carelessly together, will form a concerto, or a dozen houris, ranged in a row, an historical picture.

Having examined the poetical character of Mr. Bowles, and pointed out its most peculiar features, it only remains to shew what deviations he has made from his own proper path. It is presumed, that few readers will have any difficulty in discovering upon what models he composed the passages subjoined.

"'Twas in the twilight of the deepest wood,
"Beneath whose boughs (like sad Cocytus, fam'd
"Through fabling Greece, from lamentation nam'd)
"A river dark and silent flow'd, there stood
"A pale and melancholy man: intent
"His look upon that drowsy stream he bent,

" As ever counting (when the fitful breeze
" With strange and hollow sound sung through the trees)
" Counting the sallow leaves, that down the current went.
" He saw them NOT ————
" Earth seem'd to him one universal blot.
" Sometimes, as most distemper'd, to and fro,
" He pac'd ; and sometimes fixed his chilling look
" Upon a dreadful book,
" Inscribed with secret characters of woe ;
" While gibb'ring imps, as mocking him, appear'd,
" And airy laughter 'mid the dusk was heard." P. 56.

" Upon a beaked promontory high,
" With streaming heart, and cloudy brow severe,
" Mark'd ye the FATHER of the frowning year ?
" Dark vapours roll'd o'er the tempestuous sky,
" When creeping WINTER from his cave came forth ;
" ' Stern courier of the storm, (he cry'd,) WHAT FROM THE
" NORTH ?"

NORTH WIND.

" ' SHOUTS, AND THE NOISE OF BATTLE !' and again
" The winged wind blew loud a deadly blast ;
" ' SHOUTS, AND THE NOISE OF BATTLE !' the long main
" Seem'd with hoarse voice to answer as he past.

" But rousing him from his desponding trance,
" Cold EURUS blew his sharp and shrilling horn ;
" In his right-hand he bore an icy lance,
" That far off glitter'd in the frost of morn ;
" The old man knew the clarion from afar,
" ' WHAT FROM THE EAST ?' he cry'd.

EAST WIND.

" SHOUTS, AND THE NOISE OF WAR !" (P. 190.)

In these instances, it is plain, that the author has been enticed from his accustomed track by a wish for variety ; and perhaps by a desire to accommodate himself to the mode, which might have prevailed at the time they were composed. But it is easy to produce specimens to make good the opinion above expressed respecting the inferiority of this volume to the author's former productions. His " Melodies of Remembrance," which relate to a subject with which he might have been ex-

pected to be more than commonly inspired, prove that, even in his proper field, his vigour is abated. What can be duller or more common-place, than the following effusion, except the attempt at humour in the note?

"Ah, no! forgive the vain intruding thought,
"And let me * * * *,† love thee as I ought:
"Love thee with warmth no language can express,
"With ecstacy, subdued by tenderness!

"Love thee with fervent friendship, that would bear,
"All griefs itself, so THOU wert free from care!
"LOVE thee with HONOUR, by each action shewn,
"That HELD THY PEACE FAR DEARER THAN MY OWN!"

Lest it might be possible, however, to exceed the insipidity of these lines, the author, as if resolved, that none should win from him the palm of dulness, has composed a dirge:

"THE DIRGE OF NELSON.

"TOLL NELSON'S KNELL! a soul more brave
"Ne'er triumph'd on the green-sea wave!
"Sad o'er the Hero's honour'd grave,
"TOLL NELSON'S KNELL.

"The ball of Death unerring flew:
"His cheek has lost its ardent hue:
"He sinks, amid his gallant crew!
"TOLL NELSON'S KNELL.

"Yet lift, brave Chief, thy dying eyes;
"Hark! loud huzzas around thee rise;
"Aloft the flag of conquest flies!
"THE DAY IS WON!

"THE DAY IS WON——PEACE TO THE BRAVE!
"But whilst the joyous streamers wave,
"We'll think upon the VICTOR'S GRAVE!
"PEACE TO THE BRAVE!"

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† The reader may place any name he likes best, with the exception of Chloe, Delia, or Dorothy!

Few readers will be found so fastidious, as not to be pleased with some of the productions of this writer's pensive and descriptive genius: but it is not likely that many, who shall examine his last work, will regret that he has 'closed his book for ever.'

AN ACCOUNT OF THE EMPIRE OF MAROCCO, AND THE DISTRICT OF SUSE; COMPILED FROM MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS, MADE DURING A LONG RESIDENCE IN, AND VARIOUS JOURNIES THROUGH, THESE COUNTRIES. TO WHICH IS ADDED, AN ACCURATE AND INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF TIMBUCTOO, THE GREAT EMPORIUM OF CENTRAL AFRICA. BY JAMES GREY JACKSON, ESQ.---*Printed for the Author, by W. Bulmer and Co. and sold by G. and W. Nicol, Pall-Mall.* 1809.

AS this had appeared to me to be a very interesting publication, involving many curious and some truly important particulars, I held it to be a duty, which I owed both to my readers and myself, to employ every means in my power for tracing certain matters, which seemed to rest upon simple affirmation, to their true and genuine sources of authority, before I set my name to a review of Mr. Jackson's volume.

He informs us in his preface that it has been "Compiled "from various notes and observations, made during a resi- "dence of sixteen years in different parts of the Empire of "Marocco." This is a claim, which very few of our travelled authors have to prefer, and certain it is, that the Englishman, who for sixteen years has voluntarily devoted himself to the hazard and horror of living under the dominion of a Moorish despot, has fairly and to a certain extent earned a title, to be believed, when he is describing what he has seen

and known and learned of the country: yet if he tells of things altogether new and strange, and such as it is hard to credit, there should be something more than mere assertion on his part to ensure our faith, and reconcile us to the tale of wonder. When, for instance, in the chapter, that treats of zoology, we are told of the swiftness and abstemiousness of the desart horse, possessing such extraordinary powers, and refusing all sustenance but that of camel's milk, and above all of the heirie, or camel called tasayee, which in traversing the desart, performs the length of nine days journies in one, with a swiftness, which seems to elude all description except that of a telegraph, we assuredly want something more solid than mere narration to support the fact, and keep our faith from staggering. When in the region about Timbuctoo, as yet unvisited by any English, (and I might say any European traveller) we are informed of a river, which would convey us to Grand Cairo through a tract as thickly strewed with populous towns as China, and that this river is in fact a western branch of the Nile itself, to be traced from its source in the Jibbel Kumra, or Mountains of the Moon, so called, to its junction with the Eastern or Egyptian streams;—the geographer is startled by intelligence so new, and would naturally urge those questions, which I have anticipated, and require that explanation, which I have sought for and obtained.

When a traveller makes notes of his own adventures, with a pre-determined purpose to impart them to the public, and enjoy the luxury of writing a book, he makes himself the hero of his story, and of course must make the story worthy of its hero.

This certainly was not in the contemplation of Mr. Jackson; the engagement, that occasioned him to make so long a residence in a Mohammedan country, and to perfect himself in a language, that is spoken in all parts wheresoever Mohammedans are, were of a political as well as a commercial

sort. In that character he was appointed by the old government of Holland, agent to the States General, and, having negotiated with the Emperor Muley Yezzid, hoisted their flag at Agadeer or Santa Cruz, and opened that port to foreign commerce. Here he established himself in trade, till he was obliged to leave Santa Cruz, when the present Emperor, jealous perhaps of the natural strength of the place, situated at the extremity of the Atlas Mountains, ordered it to be evacuated. This measure, dictated in the suspicious character of Marocco policy, obliged Mr. Jackson to cross the Atlas Mountains with the Prince's army, and repair to the Emperor, who then held his court at Marocco: this inland capital was no station for our author's purpose, and he was permitted to go to Mogodor on the coast at the distance of about a hundred miles, where he again established a house of commerce, under the firm of James Jackson and Co. when upon the death of Mr. Layton the partnership being dissolved, the survivor came to England, and having no other object but to render his communications useful to the African association, after several interviews with them, was induced by the liberal suggestions of the Earl of Moira to publish those remarks and that body of information, which are to be found in the volume now under my review.

Thus it came to pass, that Mr. Jackson, without courting the fame of an author, has become the unobtrusive narrator of his own observations, and these he has committed to the public with less parade of dictation, and more modest avoidance of egotism, than I can recollect to have observed in any other writers of the same description, whether their scale of travel has been great or small, foreign or domestic. For it shall sometimes happen that the passenger in a stage-coach between Bath and London, shall blow as loud a trumpet to puff his pennyworth of adventures, as if he had penetrated into unexplored latitudes, and added newly-discovered countries to the map of Earth.

Travellers of this sort have been successfully exposed of late by some, who seem to have a way of getting at their pocket-books, and yet keeping clear of the penalties of the law.

Of Barbary it may be said, that no country on the globe, of which so much has been written, is so little known. In the mean time its natural fertility entitles it to be considered as the garden of the world; in its products it possesses every thing, that can invite the trader to its coasts, in its government much, that may discourage him from resorting to them. By referring to the eleventh chapter of this volume, (p. 193.) where a statement is given of exports and imports, accurately transcribed from the original Arabic books of the Custom-house at Mogodor, a correct idea may be formed of the trade carried on in that port. In the list of exports will be found almost every article, that is in request either for luxury or for general use; the advantages, that our traders might derive from the vast abundance of raw materials, that would be bartered in exchange for manufactured goods, are in a manner incalculable; yet such is the wretched state of this neglected trade, that, "with the exception of two or three houses, there "is, at present, no European establishment of any conse-"quence at Mogodor,"—and it is to be feared that Mr. Jackson is too well founded in his remark, "that with Consuls, "who are equally unacquainted with the language of the "country, and the manners, politics, and complexion of the "Court, we must not expect that the British merchant will "be sufficiently encouraged to make considerable adventures "to West Barbary."

Still it should appear from the opinion of this well-informed writer, that means are in our power by prudent regulations, and intelligent well-chosen agents, to revive this languishing, but important, branch of trade.

"A close connexion, (he observes) with the empire of Marocco "is of the greatest importance to Great Britain, both in a politi-

"cal and commercial point of view; for, besides the various arti-
"cles of trade already enumerated, it affords ample supplies of
"provisions; and, if a friendly intercourse between the two na-
"tions were firmly established, we should never have any difficulty
"in victualling not only Gibraltar, but also all our different fleets
"which cruize in the Mediterranean, and on the northern coast
"of Africa; a resource, which, in the present state of things, cer-
"tainly merits the serious attention of this country. The advan-
"tages of a trade with this empire must be evident, from what has
"been detailed in the preceding pages, where it will be seen that
"*nearly the whole of the exports to Marocco consists of*
"*manufactured goods, and that the returns for these are en-*
"*tirely raw materials*, many of which are essentially necessary
"in our manufacture."

Greater advantages in point of trade than these, no country can hold forth; and it is Mr. Jackson's opinion,

"That we have it in our power, by proper representations and
"a judicious negociation, to supply through this channel a great
"part of the interior of Africa with our superfluous manufactures,
"while we might receive in return many very valuable and useful
"articles; such as oil of olives, hides, skins, almonds, gums,
"wax, silver and gold; in addition to which may be mentioned,
"oranges and lemons, of which a greater quantity might be pro-
"cured from two ports (Tetuan and Rabat) in the empire, than is
"afforded both by Spain and Portugal. The oranges of Tetuan
"(he says) are the finest in the world, and are sold for eight
"drahims, or about 3s. 6d. per thousand. In short, nothing is
"wanting to secure a most extensive and lucrative trade with
"Marocco, but an established friendship between the two nations,
"strengthened by a mutual return of good offices and attentions.
"Indeed (he adds) the present emperor, Muley Soliman, may be
"said to have made overtures of this nature."

The fact I find to be as follows.—Muley Soliman, the reigning monarch, who is better versed in the laws of the Koran, than any man in his empire, and in his nature more merciful than any of the antecedent sovereigns of Marocco, wrote a letter with his own hand to his Majesty our King, which after being sent to the universities for interpretation, was rendered into English by the author of this volume, and we presume has been answered. In this imperial letter, Muley

Soliman, addressing his Majesty by the sacred title of *Sultan*, pays him the highest respect that ever was offered by a Mooselman to a Christian king.

In the twenty-four first pages of this work, the author gives a geographical account of the four grand divisions of the empire of Marocco, viz. northern, central, southern and eastern.

In the northern division, we find the towns of Fez, Mequinas, Tetuan, Tangier, and many others, whose names are not so familiar to us. This province extends along the shores of the Mediterranean sea, and abounds in corn and cattle. The vicinity of Tetuan produces (as has been already observed) the most delicious oranges in the world; figs, grapes, melons, apricots, plums, strawberries, apples, pears, pomgranates, citrons, lemons, limes, and the refreshing fruit of the opuntia or prickly pear. It has forests of oak, cork and other valuable trees of large growth. Hemp, cotton of a superior quality, honey, wax, gum-arabic, and the tobacco called Mequinasi, so much esteemed for making snuff.

In the central division, are the towns of Marocco, Saffee, and the port of Mogodor. This fine province abounds in horses and horned cattle. The horses of Abda are of the most select breed in the country: the goats are innumerable, and their skins form a principal article of exportation from the port of Mogodor. The mountains of Haha produce the famous wood called Arar, new to this country, which is proof against rot or the worm.

In the southern district, Suse is considered as the most extensive, and, excepting in grain, the richest province of the empire. The olive, almond, date, orange, grape and all the other fruits of the northern provinces abound here, particularly about Terodant, the capital of Suse; and according to our author's account, there is not perhaps a finer climate in the world than that of Suse, in which province he resided at Agadeer or Santa Cruz. The sugar-cane grows spontaneously about Terodant; cotton, indigo, gum and various kinds of

medicinal herbs are produced, and the stick-liquorice in profusion. Wax in great quantity, the gums euphorbium, sandrac and amarad, wild thyme, worm-seed, orriss root, orchilla weed, and coloquinth; antimony, salt-petre of a superior quality, copper and silver are here found; the two latter in abundance about Elala and in Shtuka.

The eastern district so overflows in dates, that a camel load, or three quintal, is sold for two dollars. The people, who live beyond the Atlas mountains in the district of Tafilelt, are described of such inviolable honesty, that a robbery has scarcely been known in the memory of man, though they use no locks: gold dust is here the circulating medium in all transactions of magnitude. There are mines of antimony and lead ore, and they carry on a considerable trade to Timbuctoo, Housa and Jinnie, south of Sahara.

To these geographical observations, there is attached a map of West Barbary, including Suse and Tafilelt; also one other, shewing the tract across the desart as followed by the caravans from Fez to Timbuctoo. In these maps Mr. Jackson professes to have corrected the abuses and mistakes with respect to names, which in others will be found. He also vouches for their accuracy, and expresses his belief that in a short time they will be considered the most correct of any hitherto published.

In his Zoology, chapter the seventh, Mr. Jackson expatiates in an interesting manner on the beauty of the Gazel or Antelope, and quotes an Arabian sonnet to shew how the poets in that language have made it the vehicle to convey compliments to their mistresses—*You have the eyes of an Antelope, O lady—you possess the beauty of a Gazel.* "These," he says, "are irresistible compliments with the Arabs: in "short, perfect beauty and gazel beauty are synonymous "terms."

The animal called El Horreh, an inhabitant of Sahara, and never found to the northward of the river Suse, is held in

sovereign estimation by the Arabs, as the emblem of cleanliness; and if we may believe the tradition of its never lying down, lest it should defile the purity of its skin, we may suppose it conscious of its beauty. It is described as somewhat similar to the gazel in its form and size, coloured with a light tint of red on its back and head, but so intensely white in the under parts, as to give pain to the eyes by its dazzling brilliancy. The stone called bizoar, is a concretion produced by this animal, but whether formed in the stomach or elsewhere, Mr. Jackson does not undertake to say, and thinks it is not accurately ascertained. This stone is scraped and taken as an antidote against poison.

The Avadad is a singular animal, who throws himself from the steepest cliffs and precipices of the Atlas mountains with impunity, and lights on his horns and shoulders in the plains below, when thirst compels him to the stream: These curious tumblers hitherto undescribed are so very wild, as not to be approached without great danger, and my author believes he is correct in affirming, that the only two skins of this animal, which ever found their way to Europe, and then with considerable difficulty and expence, were by him presented to Sir Joseph Banks.

Mr. Jackson, speaking of the Rhinoceros, says,

"With regard to the animal called by our heralds the Unicorn, "and represented in armorial bearings, I doubt if ever such an "animal existed—for I have frequently conversed with men, who "had been twenty years in the different countries of the interior "of Africa, but never could learn that a beast with one horn "existed, in figure resembling a horse."

In the like cautious unassuming style, which marks so strongly the enquirer after truth, he says that

"The Jumars, the reputed offspring of the ass and the bull or "cow, are animals whose existence is still doubted: I have never in "any of my travels seen such an one; but I was once informed by "the best authority, that such a beast was sometimes seen in Bled-"el-Jerrede; my informer had not however seen it himself. Dr.

"Shaw has described one, that he saw in Barbary; notwithstanding which, the Count de Buffon disputes its existence."

I come now to speak of that wonderful animal the Heirie, or desart camel, which by the providence of the Creator, seems exclusively bestowed upon those, whose lot it is to traverse that inhospitable and trackless waste, those burning and intolerable sands, which, if no such animal were in being, would form a chasm and impassable barrier between nation and nation, inhabitants of the same continent, and forever separate those who are reciprocally dependant on each other for an interchange of produce necessary to the comforts, and in many cases to the immediate wants of each. That this creature should be endowed with powers and properties, that enable it to journey day after day without food or water over those dreadful tracts, where neither water nor food can be had, decidedly evinces a Divine interposition: But for a more particular description of the astonishing performances of this extraordinary animal, I must refer my reader to the very words of Mr. Jackson:

"Mounted on the heirie or desart camel, (which is in figure "similar to the camel of burden, but more elegantly formed) the "Arab, with his loins, breast and ears bound round, to prevent the percussion of air proceeding from a quick motion, "rapidly traverses, upon the back of this abstemious animal, "the scorching desart, the fiery atmosphere of which parches and "impedes respiration so as almost to produce suffocation. The "motion of the heirie is violent, and can be endured only by those "patient abstemious and hardy Arabs, who are accustomed to it. "The most inferior kind of heirie are called Talatayee, a term "expressive of their going three days journey in one; the next "kind is called Sebayee, a term appropriated to that, which goes "seven days journey in one, and this is the general character; "there is also one called Tasayee, or the heirie of nine days; these "are extremely rare."

Mr. Jackson says, (p. 41)—"A journey of thirty-five days "caravan-travelling will be performed by a sebayee in five "days: they go from Timbuctoo to Tafilelt in seven days. "One of these animals once came from Fort St. Joseph on

"the Senegal river to the house of Messrs. Cabane and "Depras, at Mogodor, in seven days." These astonishing trajects (each performed in the space of seven days) cannot by my author's computation be less than one thousand miles respectively. The witnesses to the truth of the latter fact are of the highest respectability, and the time passed by the way was ascertained by the date of the dispatch; which the rider of the heirie brought. There is also an authentic anecdote of a sebayee, that went from Mogodor to Marocco, and returned to Mogodor between sunrise and eleven o'clock at night; a journey of two hundred miles. This is a performance, that challenges all the annals of Newmarket to equal, and perhaps exceeds what their philosophy can expound, or their candour give perfect credit to. Yet it is no wonder in the country where the animal is known, and might be backed by the attestations of thousands. "The swiftness of the heirie is thus "described by the Arabs in their figurative style—When "thou shalt meet a heirie, and say to the rider, *Salem Alick!* "ere he shall have answered thee, *Alick Salem!* he shall be "afar off, and nearly out of sight; for his swiftness is like "the wind."

When my author computes by the term of a day's journey, he is to be understood as speaking of a journey of seven hours, at the rate of three miles and a half an hour, which is the rate of the camel of burden; so that a day's journey is on an average about twenty-four miles. As for the animal called a dromedary, (if any such be in existence) it is absolutely unknown and unheard of in Western Africa, and remains a question for the naturalists to decide.

As the Arabs of the desart have this superior breed of camels, in like manner they have the desart horse, *Sh'rubah Er'rech*, which literally signifies *Wind-sucker;* the animal is so called, from his hanging out his tongue at one side of his mouth, when in speed, and, as it were, sucking in the air: in height about fourteen hands, and gaunt as a greyhound, his

extraordinary powers seem to be seated in the breadth and strength of his chest, which is two spans between his fore-legs; these, though extremely fine in bone, are uncommonly strong in sinew, and his swiftness and durability exceed those of the common barb almost in the same degree, as the sebayee exceeds the common camel. The Arab employs him chiefly in hunting the ostrich, a sport in which he is particularly expert. The motion of this little speedy animal is uneasy to an unpractised rider; he is very low in the crest, and carries his head straight out, and so *tucked up*, (as the jockey phrase is) that he must be girted round the breast. The Scheik Abyd Allah, a familiar friend of Mr. Jackson, rode one of these horses from Mogodor to Santa Cruz, which is not less than a hundred English miles, between the dawn of day and four o'clock in the afternoon: my author also informs me, that upon meeting this Scheik on the sands of Mogodor, so mounted, and being challenged to try the speed of his Barbary horse, which was one of the finest in that country, fifteen hands and a half high, the Scheik upon his desart galloway gave him a start of one hundred yards in the distance of about one mile, and soon passed him with a velocity, that put all competition of speed instantly out of question.

The Arabs, who inhabit the cultivated spots, called Oasis, in the desart, where this horse is bred, feed him upon camel's milk, to which he becomes so attached as to reject all other sustenance, even water; and when brought to Marocco, which sometimes happens, he falls away—"and if obliged "ultimately from hunger to eat barley and straw, the Moorish "provender, he recovers, gradually fills up, and becomes "handsome to the sight, but loses entirely his usual speed." Nay, he does more than this, for Mr. Jackson quotes an instance within his own knowledge, of Alkaid Omar ben Daudy, an Arab of Rahammenah, and Governor of Mogodor, "who had two Saharawan horses in his stables (horses of the "desart), and finding it inconvenient to feed them constantly

" on camel's milk, he resolved to try them on the usual food " given to Barbary horses; he accordingly had their food " gradually changed, and in a short time fed them altogether " with barley, and occasionally wheat and straw. They " grew fat, and looked better than before; but they lost their " speed, and soon afterwards died, as if nature had designed " them to be appropriated solely to that district, whose arid " and extensive plains render their use essentially necessary."

If Mr. Jackson's famous barb was as speedy as one of our profest running horses, the experiment of his match with the Scheik Abyd Allah might tempt our gentlemen of the turf to speculate upon an importation of one of these Sh'rabah Er'-rechs, or wind-suckers, accompanied with a nursery of camels, and an Arab for his training groom and rider. His breed however might be attainable, and an object perhaps, which some may think worthy of the experiment.

" Gold and silver mines are found in several parts of the " empire of Marocco, particularly about Messa in the pro- " vince of Suse." Of these the Emperor had caused some to be destroyed from reasons of policy, and others, particularly one very rich in silver, which being situated between two clans, who were continually fighting for it, was rendered of no use to either. Iron, copper and lead ore, salt-petre, sulphur and antimony of the finest quality are in great abundance, and " vast quantities of salt are conveyed by the Akkabas to " Soudan, where none is produced, and on that account is so " valuable at Timbuctoo, that a pound weight is frequently " bartered for an ounce of gold dust." To that city, the great emporium of central Africa, where immense treasures of gold are amassed, and which is as yet unvisited by any European adventurer, the curiosity of the reader will naturally be directed.

The caravans of Marocco, Fez, Tunis, Algier, Tripoli, Egypt, &c. have from time immemorial carried on a very extensive and lucrative trade with Timbuctoo, across the great desart

Sahara, between the months of September and April inclusive From Fez, the distance may be reckoned at fifteen hundred miles, S. S. E.

"The articles transported by the company of merchants trading "from Fez to Timbuctoo, are principally as follows: Various "kinds of German linens, viz. plattilias, rouans, brettanias, muslins "of different qualities, particularly muls, Irish linens, cambricks, "fine cloths of particular colours, coral beads, amber beads, pearls, "Bengal raw silk, brass nails (in great request), coffee, fine "hyson teas, refined sugar, and various manufactures of Fez and "Tafilelt, viz. shawls and sashes of silk and gold, hayks of silk, "of cotton and silk mixed, of cotton and of wool; also an im- "mense quantity of (hayk filelly) Tafilelt hayks, a particularly "light and fine manufacture of that place, and admirably adapted "to the climate of Soudan; to these may be added red woollen "caps, the general covering of the head, turbans, Italian silks, "nutmegs, cloves, ginger, and pepper, Venetian beads, cowries, "and a considerable quantity of tobacco and salt, the produce of "Barbary and Bled-el-jerrêde."

The returns made for these articles by the traders at Timbuctoo, consist in gold dust, twisted rings of Wangara of pure gold, gold rings wrought at Jinnie, where they make various trinkets of such workmanship as would be difficult to imitate either in England or France, bars of gold, elephants' teeth, gum of Soudan, grains of Sahara, (called by us grains of paradise) odoriferous gums of exquisite perfume for the purposes of fumigation, *slaves in great number*, brought from the regions, which border on the Jibbel Kumra, or Mountains of the Moon, (so called from their white or lunar colour) a chain, which, with little or no intermission, runs through the continent of Africa from west to east, viz. from Assentee in the west to Abyssinia in the east—whilst the finest ostrich feathers and ambergris are collected by the caravans in their passage on the confines of the Desart.

As the caravans perform their stated daily journies over this trackless waste, they direct their course to certain well-known hospitable spots, interspersed like islands in the ocean, called Oasi's, or Wahsi's, which are inhabited, cultivated,

and of amazing fertility and luxuriance; in these the caravans halt about seven days, for the purpose of feeding, refreshing their camels, and recruiting their water-skins.

There is no reason why any European traveller might not safely attach himself to one of these *accumulated caravans*, and visit Timbuctoo, provided only that he had made himself a master of the Western Arabic; an indispensable accomplishment, which I understand Mungo Parke to have been deficient in, and of course unqualified for the task he undertook.

The caravans perform the traverse of the Desart, including their sojournments at the watering places, in about one hundred and thirty days, going at the rate of three miles and an half an hour, and travelling seven hours a day: out of these one hundred and thirty, they rest seventy-five days, which leaves fifty-five days for actual travelling, and from these data the reader may easily make a loose computation of the distance. It is practicable however for caravans to perform this journey in much less time, and there is a note (p. 241) in which Mr. Jackson says, "That when he had a commercial esta-"blishment at Agadeer, he himself received a caravan of gum "Soudan from Timbuctoo in eighty-two days."

As the slaves of Wangara and Houssa, purchased by the caravans at Timbuctoo, are sold on their return to the Moors and Arabs of Barbary, it is clear that there is a traffick for the human species carried on between inhabitants of the same continent, in which no European nation, or even individual, is concerned. This traffick is of high antiquity, long antecedent to any European practice of that reproachful nature: so far therefore as it may have contaminated the character of the Christian trader, he has to plead in extenuation of his error, that he was the last to begin, and the first to leave it off.

The territory of Timbuctoo, as described by Mr. Jackson,

"May be said to extend northward to the confines of Sahara, "or the Desart, a tract of country about ninety miles in breadth;

"the western boundary is one hundred and thirty miles west of the "city, and the eastern extends to the Bahar Soudan, or the Sea of "Soudan, which is a lake formed by the Nile El Abeede, whose "opposite shore is not discernible. On its opposite or eastern "shore, begins the territory of the white people, denominated by "the Arabs (N'sarrath) Christians, or followers of Jesus of Naza-"reth: south of the river is another territory of immense extent, the "boundary of which extends to Lamlem, or Melli, which latter is re-"ported to be inhabited by one of the lost or missing tribes of Israel."

The city of Timbuctoo would furnish to the traveller a most interesting spectacle, forasmuch as it is resorted to by traders from all the neighbouring nations, who enjoy perfect security of property and person, with unlimited toleration as to their religious worship, of whatever description that may chance to be. The city is about twelve miles in circumference, and without walls; the houses are on one floor, spacious and the apartments lighted by doors, that open into an interior square; the inhabitant not requiring the accommodation of a window, whilst the climate never reminds him of the inconvenience of an open door. The women are extremely handsome, and the men proportionably jealous: in every other respect they are hospitable, splendid and particularly pride themselves in their attention to strangers. What then has a European to fear in such a community, and where can he be so entirely to his heart's content as in a country, whose mines of gold are inexhaustible, and where every thing he sees, and touches and can take away with him, is that precious metal, the very object he adores, the crown of all his wishes, the reward of all his travel, the first and last great ruling passion of his heart?

The name of the rich and potent monarch, who governed Timbuctoo, in the year 1800, and was sovereign of Bambarra, was Woolo: he is native of the country, and, like his people, black. His usual residence is in the neighbouring city of Jinnia, though he has three palaces at Timbuctoo, which are said to contain an immense quantity of gold; and fortunate it is for Woolo, that his surrounding desarts are such an im-

passable barrier, else his black army of five hundred thousand negroes would hardly serve to keep certain marauding white men from unfurnishing those palaces, whose shores are so much more tempting to the plunderer than the statues and pictures of Italy and Spain. Still there are avenues, by which commerce may approach and reach him, and as he will weigh gold even against salt, when there is a dearth of that necessary in his country, we have only to find those avenues, and his hoards at Timbuctoo will gradually melt away into general circulation. The climate of this yet unvisited city is salubrious in the extreme, which is more than men bargain for, when they go to a country, that abounds in gold: the sexes marry early, for they are in the latitude of 16° 40′; and the natives, as well as those who have resided there any considerable time, have a suavity of manners, not to be observed on the northern side of the Desart. There are several large caravanseras or houses of accommodation for travellers in Timbuctoo, where they will find lodging for themselves and their cattle, till better provision can be made for their establishment.

I particularly recommend the following extract to the attention of my readers:

"It has been said, that there is an extensive library at Timbuctoo, "consisting of manuscripts in a character differing from the Arabic: "this I am inclined to think has originated in the fertile imagina- "tion of some poet, or perhaps some Arab or Moor, who willing to "indulge at the expense of European curiosity, has fabricated such "a story. In all my enquiries during many years, I never heard "of any such library at Timbuctoo. *The state library, which is "composed for the most part of manuscripts in the Arabic, con- "tains a few Hebrew, and perhaps Chaldaic books; amongst "the Arabic it is probable there are many translations from "Greek and Latin authors at present unknown to Europeans.*" (P. 257.)

It seems by this account that there is a state library, and probably many Arabic translations of Greek and Latin authors hitherto unknown. How much therefore is it to be

regretted that Mr. Jackson, qualified as he is by his perfect knowledge of Arabic, had not found leisure and ambition to visit and examine this library, which perhaps contains a treasure richer and more valuable to the enlightened world, than all the golden palaces, which the negro monarch of Bambarra has in his possession!

The path seems open to adventure, and the time may come, when those who send forth missionaries to explore those interesting regions, will recollect, that when a traveller cannot speak the language of the country he is in, he will gain very little information from the people that inhabit it.

It is asserted that the mines belonging to the Sultan Woolo are so pure, that lumps of virgin gold are constantly found of several ounces in weight. These mines are worked by the negroes of Bambarra, who are thereby made extremely rich, "for all "pieces of ore, which they take from the mines, not weigh- "ing twelve mizans, or about two ounces, become a perquisite "to themselves, as a remuneration for their labour, and all "pieces of a greater weight belong to the Sultan, and are de- "posited in his before-mentioned palaces."

I shall now conclude by giving the substance of certain passages, extremely curious, which relate to the river near Timbuctoo, which is called the Nile el Abeede, or Nile of the Negroes.—In the interior of Africa, and amongst the rich traders, who engage in this traffick across the continent, there is but one opinion with regard to the Nile of Egypt and the Nile of Timbuctoo, and that opinion is, that they are one and the same river, or rather that the latter is the western branch of the former. The source of the Nile of Timbuctoo is at the foot of the western branch of the chain of mountains called Jibbel Kumra, where it forms a *merja*, or swamp The copious springs, which throw the water up with great force, are very numerous, and are found on both sides of the mountain, that is on the eastern as well as on the western side. That these streams communicate with each other is an opinion

so general, that the Africans express their astonishment, whenever the Europeans dispute the fact, and assert that it is a folly to doubt what the experience of succeeding ages has demonstrated to be true. That the Nile of Timbuctoo communicates with Cairo, has been ascertained to a certainty by a party of seventeen negroes of Jinnie, who proceeded thither in a canoe, on a commercial speculation, and reached Cairo, after a trafficking voyage of fourteen months, who reported that there are twelve hundred cities and towns, with mosques or towers in them, between Timbuctoo and Cairo, built on or near the banks of the Nile el Abeede and the Nile Massar, or in other words the Nile of Soudan and the Nile of Egypt. Precisely where they join is not ascertained, or, more properly speaking, has not come to the knowledge of my author. The Nile el Abeede being the greater, and running through a larger tract of country than the Nile Cham, or Nile Massar, is called Nile el Kabeer, the greater Nile; the Nile of Egypt, however, is not called the lesser Nile, but always, as above, the Nile Cham, or Nile Massar; Cham being the Arabic name for Egypt, when united to Syria and other countries. The Nile el Abeede overflows in the same manner as the Nile of Egypt, when the sun enters Cancer: at Kabra near Timbuctoo, it becomes a very large stream. River-horses and crocodiles are found in it, and the country contiguous to its southern banks is covered with forests of primæval growth, in which are many trees of great size and beauty: these forests abound with elephants of an enormous size.

I now close my imperfect review of this very interesting work, which I earnestly recommend to my readers, not doubting but they will find it altogether as worthy of their study and attention, as the Swedish literati have of theirs, who, as I am well informed, are preparing a translation in the Swedish language at the University of Upsala near Stockholm.

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